

*Along the*  
FRIENDLY  
WAY



JAMES M.  
LUDLOW



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1932.  
Along the friendly way





Along the Friendly Way

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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A CONCENTRIC CHART OF HISTORY

THE CAPTAIN OF THE JANIZARIES

THE AGE OF THE CRUSADES

DEBORAH, A DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM

INCENTIVES FOR LIFE

SIR RAOUL ; A Tale of Venice  
and Constantinople

JUDGE WEST'S OPINION

AVANTI ; A Tale of Sicily





Sincerely Yours,  
James M. Luther

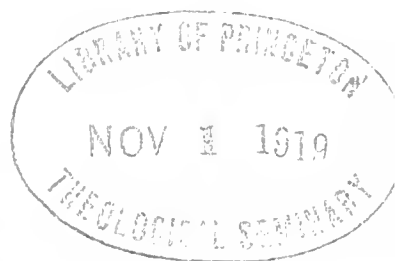
# Along The Friendly Way

Reminiscences and Impressions

By  
JAMES M. LUDLOW



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*To*  
*MY GRANDCHILDREN*



## Salutation

**A** MAN is walking toward the sunset. He stops; turns half about. He is fascinated with something in the direction from which he has come. There is a reflected glow in the sky, which burnishes the zenith and makes the eastern horizon almost rival in beauty the more gorgeous colors of the west. A delicate purple invests the familiar hills, as if they had put on their richest garments to wave the traveller a loving farewell. The windows of the scattered houses gleam as from familiar hearth-fires. There are glimmerings of lake and stream which seem to give him the wink of remembered friendship. And through the landscape runs the road he has travelled, its dust transformed into powdered gold, its steep acclivities levelled by the distance, and the turnings which bewildered him as he passed along now all straightened by the long perspective.

I am that man. I am "going west," and have nearly completed the eighth decade of the journey.

Of course, I am interested in the sunset, and almost excitedly curious to know what lies beyond it. Am I to enter and be a sentient part of the glory? Or will those gates of iridescent pearl be an ever-receding horizon, only an eternal invitation and

allurement? Or, may I not suddenly be halted by the dark? The future is a mystery. What things are "over there" are as yet in God's hand,—the closed hand with which He offers them.

But there is no uncertainty about the backward view. It is all agleam with the things which that same Hand once dropped about me. From what I know I can trust the still unknown. In spite of sorrows, bewilderments, mistakes—and worse, I am so far along. The retrospect of life is a happy pastime,—that is, when I am wise enough to forget some things. Why should I not forget them, since the good book assures me that He no longer remembers them against me?

If it gives an old man pleasure to think over the past, it may be profitable to others who are coming the same way that he should talk out loud what he thinks,

“When all the landscape of our lives  
Lies stretched behind us, and familiar places  
Gleam in the distance, and sweet memories  
Rise like a tender haze, and magnify  
The objects we behold, that soon must vanish.”

Let me have an understanding with any one who may read these pages. The book is not an autobiography. Such a book tries to tell what the writer was and did. But looking back over the years I do not find myself sufficiently interested in what I was or did to chronicle it. But what men and things did to me is a more important matter, and may be

worth while telling. Let us talk of some of the scratches, indentations and shapings a man is apt to get as he tumbles along in the great common current.

Nor is the book a record of a special professional career. One's occupation only gives him his place in the stream, and determines what things will strike him; but the effect is about the same with us all. That one man is a preacher and another man a printer is something accidental, as scientists would say, and not essential to their both being men. I take it, from familiarity with thousands of all sorts of people, that the deeper interests that absorb us, the greater passions that sway us, the more potent influences that make up character, are similar in the experience of the majority of men.

These pages are, therefore, simply little bundles of reminiscence of one human being looking back from the Psalmist's Bound of Life over the way he has trudged along with the crowd of his generation.

And that crowd! How it has jostled me, as, until recently, I have been compelled to lead an active life! In the multitude of fellow-trampers I struck antagonisms. But the recollection of such things grows very dim, while the road of memory is thronged with kindly faces and helping hands. So I title the book *Along the Friendly Way*, and ask you to jog along with me a little while.

J. M. L.

*East Orange, N. J.*



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# I

## SOME PRELIMINARIES

### *I Am Born.*

SO says our big family Bible, on one of the unprinted leaves between the Old and New Testaments, right next to the Apocrypha, of which unauthenticated records I am inclined to think it a part. The dictionary defines "born" as "brought into being"; and I am somewhat sceptical of the current notion that the assumption of one's present manikin form marks the absolute beginning of one's existence. To borrow a figure from the electric bulb under which I am now sitting, I conceive that present life may be only a briefly elongated spark leaping a gap between two eternities; that the happenings, doings and experiences of the mortal estate furnish, as it were, only the material of a sort of incandescent wire which gives temporary shape and visibility to a spiritual something that always was and always will be.

To this notion I am sometimes inclined from having often had those shadowy reminiscences of which Plato speaks in arguing for a previous state of existence. Even as a child I was frequently puzzled in going to a hitherto unvisited place by a

vivid persuasion that I had been the same way before. My memory seemed to supply road-marks before my senses detected them. Is there a subconscious recollection whose diary is written, not on brain tissue, but upon some finer and imperishable filament of the soul? Is there a sort of spiritual power in men, akin to the scent in deer, which discerns old runways from which all footprints have been obliterated? Do we possess something of a higher order akin to the instinct which enables a cat carried away in a darkened basket to retrace her way home; or to that of birds that migrate for their winter vacations in the far South and return again to their old nests on our northern lawns, though they find no wing-scratches on the air?

But alas for me! though my memory—or my imagination—seems to blaze the way, I confess that it does not lead me clearly enough through the prenatal homeland to assure me that I shall not get lost in my present transmigratory speculations. I can only venture the opinion that I may have tarried in those zones, as Edwin Arnold describes them in “The Light of Asia,”

. . . “where saintliest spirits dead  
Wait ten thousand years, then live again.”

**Or, where souls**

. . . “as feathered reed-seeds fly  
O’er rock and loam and sand, until they find  
Their marsh, and multiply.”

In this one respect I sympathize with Schopenhauer. One day, as he was walking with head bowed by the weight of his meditations, a rude fellow butted into him.

“Who are you anyway?” said the rowdy.

The philosopher eyed the intruder sadly as he responded, “Who am I? How I wish I knew!”

But, while I cannot solve the mystery of human origin, I decline to search for it in the marshes of pessimism where fancy transforms punk-glow into demons’ heads. There are sun-clad hills from which one can see farther than through the fogs. Bright clouds doubtless shut out the view of the horizon as effectually as do the black clouds, but I like the bright obscurations. I prefer to build my ancestral “castle in the air” out of them rather than with the dank vapors of the abyss. So, if the pages of my prenatal journal are written in what to me is a dead language—only a few undecipherable hieroglyphic letters—these letters, like some in old manuscripts, are “illuminated” with bright colors. Here are some of the vagaries that please me in day-dreaming.

When I was a mere child, and had no more knowledge of architecture than has a papoose in a tepee, I watched some men building a factory. Suddenly the bricks in the walls were magnified in my imagination, as we sometimes see the pebbles on the beach changed into great boulders under the magic of a mirage. The low outlines of the factory swelled and swelled into palatial proportions and

exquisite symmetry, with façade and towers and dome. Since then I have indulged in globe-trotting, and have many times been startled by seeing in eastern lands partial reproductions of my childhood vision, but never on grander scale than in my apparent recollection. They were strange to me, yet strangely familiar. Had I ever seen them before—when I was an oriental courtier, or a nomad thief in the narrow streets of an Arab town, or a dog that watched these structures with half-open eyes as I slept on the sun-baked pavement?

Then, too, I have no artistic taste,—at least I have never been accused of it. My family would not trust me to buy an ornamental hitching-post outside the lawn gate; yet, as I have sat half asleep on the piazza, troops of fairies have danced on the lawn, any one of whom was as gracefully formed as faun or goddess in the Uffizi or Vatican.

Now if it be true that, as psychologists say, dreams are made up of the *disjecta membra* of waking visions, I must have somewhere seen the substance of these things, if not on the mirror of a fleshly eye, at least on some spiritual retina I may have once possessed. Notwithstanding the vagueness and mystery of these experiences I am not prepared to dispute so eminent authority as Max Müller, who says,—“We may have gazed on beauty in a former life. It certainly is not of this life, but it certainly underlies this life.” So I wonder if my subliminal consciousness, in its wanderings along the threshold of present existence, has not been

vehicled by another body, or if I may not have flitted as a ghost over these same material things.

It may be that my subliminal consciousness was never before incarnated; that, in its roaming through space, it had not "entered" the earth's atmosphere, where, to adopt the conceit of Tasso,

. . . "it rolled  
The air around its viewless essence, so  
That mortal eye the vision might behold."

It may have been a non-material intelligence that saw everything without eyes and felt everything without touch. Milton thought of us as made up of at least four layers, the *outer* man and "the *inner* man that is the *spirit* of the *soul*." Some of the Christian Fathers, like Origen, held that souls were created before bodies, and afterwards discovered their proper or congenial habitations. How long souls are out prospecting, these wise men do not say; they only suggest that during these pioneering expeditions souls acquire much knowledge of which present mind can have nothing but vague reminiscences.

To this band of sages my old nurse doubtless belonged. I once asked her, "Where did I come from?" She replied, "Why, you dropped through one of those pinholes in the sky,"—pointing up to the stars. Doubtless her philosophy was as good as that of most of the "Myths of the Dawn." If it be true, I will try to credit the legend that the stork brought me from one of the lagoons of light which

we sometimes see on the horizon when the sun is rising. I recall that Cicero somewhere says, "The soul's native seat is heaven; and it is with reluctance that she is thrust down from those celestial mansions into these lower regions where all is foreign and repugnant to her divine nature." I like Wordsworth:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:—  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home."

With this encouragement from philosophers and poets I will brave the accusation of being over-mystical, and acknowledge that I have sometimes felt the pull of something super- or subter-mundane from out the unknown past. Some wave seems to have rolled against me from that great ocean which I forgot as soon as I drifted up into this little creek of time. For example, just before dropping to sleep at night,—or better, when slipping down the descent into my cat-nap after lunch,—or better still, when stretched upon some summer hillside with pictured infinity expanding around me—my spirit floats with seeming naturalness, a sort of at-home-ness, over its ordinary limits as easily as clouds coast over the mountains, and fogs unroll

themselves on the sea. I can no more divest myself of this feeling than I can keep the doors and windows so tightly closed as to exclude the knowledge that my sense-world is larger than my house. Strange spiritual atmosphere comes in to me through all sorts of crack and cranny; sometimes most refreshing, exhilarating; sometimes souging dismally, and making me afraid because I must some day make my exit into the great out-of-doors where all things are unknown.

With Tennyson let us be patient until the mystery clears;—

“When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.”

### *Ancestral Ingredients.*

“One may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb;” so, having risked my philosophical repute in marauding thus far into the great border land, I may as well make a larger venture.

Oliver Wendell Holmes says that a man’s biography should begin a hundred and fifty years before his birth. A more materialistic notion, and one less agreeable to my conceit, is this,—I am nothing more than the resultant of all the forces that ever struggled through the blood and brains of my forebears from chimpanzee days; a *centesimum quid* of the ingredients that were mixed in a hundred generations, modifying or intensifying the peculiarities of their intelligence and ignorance, of their high philosophies and vagrant superstitions, their virtues

and vices, their joys and griefs, their triumphs and despairs. My natal current must have been like a stream of molten metal, now running into this mould, now into that; broken up again and thrown back into the furnace; recast a thousand times, and finally poured into the matrix of my present physical shape;—good stuff or slag according as it has been well smelted in the brains and nerves of my multifarious progenitors, or has been spoiled by them and made fit only for the refuse heap.

Some things in my experience incline me to this gruesome hypothesis. For example:

I have often had occasion to notice that I am not a unit in character. Though I am conscious of not having attained the highest virtues, and am unwilling to confess to the lowest vices, yet I have never been able to make a straight line between good and evil, but have zigzagged like a thistle in the wind. My moral biography would be about as consistent as the leaves of Saint Augustine's Confessions and those of Rousseau if torn out of their respective volumes and rearranged by the "printer's devil." "When I would do good, then evil is present with me"; now Saint George uppermost, and now the Dragon.

To be frankly honest, as an ordinary man I cannot claim to have even persisted in a great purpose of morality, except when saying my prayers. At one moment I am quite saintly in my aspiration and determination. That must be because my grandmother, who from the wall yonder looks down

upon me so serenely in the white cap that fits her like a halo, has bequeathed to me that sweet and holy quality of herself. At other moments I am indifferent to all impulses of sanctity, benumbed by trivial temptations no bigger than gnat-stings. This must be the work of some ancestor who was hanged, or ought to have been, back in the days when Robin Hood was the hero of Sherwood Forest.

I find the same inconsistency and vacillation in my moods. Still-water or cascade? That depends upon what is at the bottom of the channel where my life current flows; what these same forebears have left there where my conscious self runs babbling over my subconscious self. Yesterday I purred all day, happy in the fact that I was alive in God's beautiful world; to-morrow I will be depressed, querulous, seeing everything in blue tints, although there will be no change in my diet, my digestion, the state of the barometer or the market quotations, and not a smile will have fallen off the face of nature or the faces of my friends. This must be due to the Hivites and Jebusites who are still fighting in the Canaan I have come to possess.

I may say the same thing regarding my opinions. I pride myself upon my independent judgment. I am as stubborn as a mule when any one tries to force my conviction by authoritative statements; and the sweetest persuasions of logic and sentiment I can resist as a horse that doesn't want to be led to water. Yet at times I find myself lapsing into all sorts of prejudice, which my reason rejects and my taste

abhors. I am convinced of Free Will, for I am at times furiously wilful; yet I am spasmodically a Fatalist. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Calvinism was so strong a strain in my forefathers' and foremothers' blood. I am from deliberate principle a democrat, yet I like an occasional dictator; possibly because my ancestors were Cromwellians. I am a Christian, but have my off moments of Paganism as dark as that of the Druids, who slaughtered their vicarious victims under the oaks where my great-great-great-grandmother when a child made acorn cups into necklaces.

I have observed in testing these experiences that they are antagonistic, and I am not inclined to compromise on any *via media*. I have taken my virtues and vices, my truths and follies, "straight," never "half an' half." I may have been saint or devil at times, but always at different times, and was never a saintly devil nor a devil of a saint. Stevenson need not have invented a drug to account for the transmutations of Jekyll and Hyde, since these two men, by some freak of nature, or in the hurry of souls to escape some spiritual thunder-shower, may have taken permanent lodging under the same skin. One is tempted to pray—especially on Sundays, when recalling the sins of the week,—“Lord, it was not I that did it, but that other fellow who shares my carnal apartment, and leaves his uncleanness about.”

I do not feel lonely in making this confession, for I am speaking of the ordinary man everywhere. I

know of no one who is morally straight as a string, except when the string is in a heap. Human nature is a tangle of inconsistencies.

You have read of Ali Pasha, the most murderous villain of modern times. He would cry like a girl when his pet bird broke its wings trying to escape from the cage. So sentimental was he that he begged the pardon of a rose when he wrenched it from its stalk to give it to one of his bloody mistresses.

A poor crippled beggar would make Louis Napoleon's pocketbook weep gold; yet a passing regiment that he had hired to cut people's throats tickled him into a laugh like that of an idiot.

William Penn would not harm an Indian to the extent of a wampum, but he delighted to watch the tortures of a malefactor in the hands of the executioners.

Robespierre, called The Incorruptible, who burned with indignation at all social shams, was a conceited ass, and had his chamber lined with mirrors that he might constantly look upon the reflection of his own ungainly form.

Why, that grandmother of mine, as sweet a soul as God ever put in frocks, used to tell me of her pastime as a little girl, when on a Friday she could go to the village green and see the culprits have their ears nailed to a board or their feet clamped in the stocks.

Query:—Does the new-born, coming down through its ancestral veins, emerge into this world like a

fresh mountain spring, or only ooze into it like surface drainage from a marsh? One thing is certain;—as we find no well filled with absolute  $H_2O$ , but all its water is tintured by the chemicals which it gathers in passing through the earth, so the soul shows traces of the various moral stuffs it has encountered, some of which stuffs are as salubrious as that of healing fountains, some as tainted as that of the Dead Sea.

*The Divine Abyss.*

A more hopeful theory of human origin is suggested by some;—namely, that before we were incarnated, even ancestrally, our spirits were parts of an infinite flood of intelligence and purity, which we call God; that all woeful traits have been contracted solely by contact with human blood; that, if we could only fathom deep enough this ocean of the Unknown, we should find all serene and salubrious.

The ancient pagan Pythagoras said that the human soul is a detached part of or emanation from the Universal Soul. Our modern pagan Renan calls us men “bubbles on the surface of existence, who feel a mysterious kinship with Our Father the Abyss.” A man who has lost a genial faith, as Renan confessed he had done when he abandoned Christianity, is apt to be lugubrious and despairing; while, on the other hand, one who is feeling his way toward faith, notwithstanding his many uncertainties, is apt to be cheerful and hopeful. The

former is only a derelict; the latter is an explorer. There is a vast difference in the manhood of a tramp and that of a prospector.

The clearer mind of Epictetus represented Zeus as saying to a mortal, "Thy body is not thine own, but only a finer mixture of clay,—but I have given thee a certain portion of myself." This ancient seems to have sounded that "Abyss" so deep that the lead found purer springs in which it was cleansed from the mud of its middle passage.

Marcus Aurelius also felt the tide-beat of this theory. If he did not entertain clearly the idea of an infinite subconsciousness he explored upward and outward, feeling his way toward a universal super-consciousness. Hear him!—"No longer let thy breathing act only in concert with the air which surrounds thee, but let thy intelligence also be in harmony with the Intelligence which embraces all things. For the Intelligent Power is no less diffused in all parts, and pervades all things for him who is willing to draw it to him, than the aerial power for him who is able to respire it." Perhaps this is akin to what Socrates meant when he spoke of the Dæmon whose wordless voice he could hear whenever he silenced the babble of his less august thoughts.

May we not then say that our individual human lives are in some sense parts of the Divine Life which comes into a diminutive, but no less real, consciousness in our immediate personalities? May not you and I be something like the divisions

of the great sea into bays and creeks, all of which, except for the defilements from their own banks and channels, are kept pure and life-full by the same mighty tides that are the pulse-beats of the ocean? Surely, as Saint Paul says, "In Him we all live, and move, and have our being:" only the Adamic inlets soiling the flow of the Blessed Spirit. May I think of Christ as a great billow from the Infinite Blessedness that beats on the bar of every man's existence, and, by the flooding of His divine and human consciousness, assures us men that we also are divine?

If indeed I am only a "bubble on the surface of existence," since that Abyss is the infinitude of God in His goodness, I shall be content some day to break through the thin filament, however opalescent it may be with present life gladness and conceits, and to sink within the Eternal Bosom.

*Not Fully Arrived.*

So I will change the family record in the old Bible, and read, not that I was born, but that I—arrived.

I wonder, however, if I arrived in this world in my entirety. Is all of me now really encased in this body? A philosopher who lived just after the Dark Ages, and owl-like was blinking with the daylight of modern inquiry, taught that the soul extends in about a three-foot radius from the spinal column; and that, if we had soul-eyes, we should appear to one another like elongated ghostly

balloons ballasted down to the earth by the weight of our bodies. The theory is saved from being ridiculous by the recent discovery of De Rochas that we may have sensation of things two feet beyond our skins. But the theory, if not unscientific, is belittling. I know I am bigger than that. At this moment I can with my soul-eyes, without changing my posture, overlap my library table and by memory reread many delightful sayings in the books on the shelves yonder. I can, without even opening the window, expand myself over the hills, greet distant friends, or look on familiar scenes beyond the seas. Of course, you will call this only imaginary inflation. But to me it is more real, in the sense that it makes more impression upon me, than anything else within the range of mere sight and touch.

Sir Oliver Lodge queers me with some of his psychological hypotheses; but there is at least sanity in this:—"The whole of us may not be incarnated in our present selves. What the rest of me may be doing for these years while I am here, I do not know; perhaps it is asleep." Let me add, I am then like a traveller from a far country who has arrived at his destination with a hand-bag containing only scant clothing and soiled, with a little loose money in his purse, but whose larger luggage has been detained somewhere *en route*, and his letters-of-credit not yet forwarded. Or possibly I resemble one of those unfortunates who, in temporary mental aberration, has wandered away from

home, forgotten his name, family and estate, fancies himself to be only a tramp, contented with what he earns in little jobs or gets in the doles of wayside charity. Will I ever come to my full self? Or rather, will my full self ever catch up with its advanced guard?

This theory suggests an interpretation of certain strange sensations I sometimes have; they are as if I felt the dragging cords of being which are not yet fully coiled within my present dimensions; a part of that mysterious substance I call "Myself" that is still trailing through the vasty expanse. Perhaps the filmy skirts of my essence have caught on the points of some star, or on the horns of the moon.

I must, then, no longer despise the astrologers; for may not my destiny be somewhat controlled by what is left up yonder? It may be that what we deride as the superstition of some German parishes is only a mark of the precocity of the dwellers in that land of Kultur. At the birth of a child they still are accustomed, as in the Middle Ages, to take his horoscope, file it in connection with his baptismal certificate, and keep a copy for ready reference in the family chest. Goethe thus tells us of his arrival on the beach of time;—"My horoscope was propitious; the sun stood in the sign of the Virgin, and had culminated for the day; Jupiter and Venus looked on me with a friendly eye, and Mercury not adversely," etc.

If some of Me—the delayed baggage of my spiritual faculties—is still within the precincts of

a brighter world, this will account for certain religious predispositions that hold me fast in spite of very strong eccentric impulses to fly away from the Creed : and also for a brightness that constantly glimmers through the misty damps of present world experiences and keeps me vaguely hopeful.

I can feel that check for my delayed spiritual baggage, as it were, in my pocket, though I can't read just what it says. I will keep the check, for perhaps all my belongings will be delivered at the next station of existence. I will emulate the patience of Job, who, in just such an embarrassing dilemma, said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

### *Vicarious Motherhood.*

The coasts of this life are girt with dangers. There is no safe landing-place for a stranger from the Beyond. We make the shore, if at all, only through heavy surfs in which vast multitudes perish. Indeed, the majority of mankind never take the first step upon the new-found land, but slip back into the Abyss. The advance of obstetrical science has buoyed some channels, but children's bones encircle the shores of life, as the reefs made by dead coral insects girdle the islands of the Caribbean Sea. If you have made the landing and have no higher faith you should imitate the ancients who hung up their garments in the temple of Neptune. Or Clotho, the Fate that holds the distaff and begins to spin the cord of life, should have

an offering for not letting Atropos prematurely clip it off.

I escaped those breakers; but narrowly. I have been told that I survived only after a series of resuscitations, "first helps," practised upon me by those who watched my coming.

My arrival was perilous not only to myself; it had a most tragic attendant. I bow my head as I write these words, overcome by the dark mystery of it all;—a mystery of suffering, of sacrifice, to which I would not refer were it not also so common. My entrance into life was my mother's exit from it. Her life and mine were "ships that passed in the night."

Thus I was ushered into the world by no "fairy godmother" with dancing feet and starry eyes; but by a sombre-robed angel with sorrowing face,—a face, as it seems to me, shadowed by the Cross; for Maternity and Calvary are the symbols of the law of vicarious sacrifice which underlies all human progress.

The ordinary problem of death does not trouble me. Indeed, I can readily discern the wisdom of the Creator in keeping human life—like that of the flowers and forests—fresh by incessant renewals. We soon grow too old, too decrepit, too rutted in our habits, too prejudiced by our past opinions, in every way too "slow of heart" to be of service in a progressive world. Let the crinkled leaves be crowded off by the swelling buds! But vicarious, that is, willing, self-extinction by one for the sake

of another is a different thing. In it the best and the bravest yield up the joys of existence for the sake of those who, it may be, are utterly unworthy of them. That is the tragic Promethean fact that no philosophy can interpret.

Yet sometimes there comes a ray through the darkness. It is where the suffering has been prompted by the intense love that makes the sacrifice even joyful. In such case the surrendering soul emerges victor, not vanquished, because it yields to an authority greater, nobler, holier than any natural right to live.

I have been told that my mother, when she surmised from the face of the physician that her life and that of her child could not both be saved, begged him to spare the child. Indeed, though the physician did not intentionally heed her request, he yet declared that but for her relinquishment of the will to live the result would have been different. Yet she had everything to live for. She was still young, beautiful, beloved of everybody, with tastes and means to drink deep the sweets of the most cultured life. These she gave up that another being, one whom she did not know, might have the chance of plucking some of the flowers of this world.

Was it altogether self-sacrifice? Though unknown to her, that babe was a part of herself; a part of her physical being, knit to her by cords of nerve; a part of her soul being too, for she had enwrapped it within her own spirit, knit it to her

by cords of love and solicitude and prayer, and imparted to it somewhat of her own spirit essence.

I lift the inquiry higher:—Was not this true of the intimate relation in which the Christ stood to humanity? Were not men and women and children His very own? Was it not predicted of Him that He should “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied” even in dying that others might live? Is not God more than a Father in Heaven? Is He not also the great Mother-heart of the sentient universe? Perhaps there is a truth that lies somewhere back of Mariolatry. The form of that dogma may be as fanciful as the clouds that veil the sunset; but the sun gilds the clouds. The mother-love of God is a fact. Alas, that it needs a human mother-love to make us think of it!

*My Invisible Guide.*

I am not a spiritualist, nor do I worship the saints. But as I look back over my long life and recall my many waywardnesses, any one of which if persisted in would have been my ruin, and when I think of how gently I have been turned back to a better course, I wonder if my mother has not guided me, even as she would have done had she lived. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Where do the blessed ones minister to men still on earth if not in the places to which their interest attracts them, and to the lives that were once—and doubtless are still—as dear to them as their own?

If this life is a preparation for continued life and service beyond, what preparation can match that of a mother's solicitude and love and sacrifice for her children?

So all through these many years of mine I have seldom thanked God for His mercies without thanking Him for my mother. And I am sure that He will forgive me if I often think of her when I pray for His guidance,—as Tennyson thought of his vanished comrade,—

“Be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,  
Be quickened with a livelier breath.”

Some object to the Biblical precept, “Love God with all thine heart,” alleging that it is impossible to love one whom we have not seen; that our affections need the accessories of face and form, of voice and manner,—a sort of trellis-work upon which our hearts climb to an appreciation of their object. A ritualistic friend argues similarly for the necessity of images of the Christ, since love cannot grow its tendrils about the purely ideal, but needs the concrete to cling to.

I am sure that the argument is not valid. I never saw my mother. I do not possess even a fair picture of her. She passed away before the days of photography. An artist had been engaged to paint her portrait. One day he made a hasty profile sketch with a pencil as a preliminary study; but

before he began his real work she was gone. A critic observes that "the secret quality of a face is apt to slip out somehow from under the cunningest painter's touch, and leave the portrait dead for lack of it." Did our artist catch with his lead pencil the "secret quality" of my mother's face? Presumably not. Yet that piece of paper is my only suggestion of her features.

But it has always been a most precious heirloom. I look at it, and in imagination try to recast the features so as to express my ideal of her character; to put back of the lines an adorable something that my love creates. But I cannot succeed. My mother is only an ideal to me. When as a child I visited my neighborhood playmates I would watch their mothers, and wonder if mine were anything like theirs; then go back to my home and cry because I could not see her whom I loved as truly as they loved theirs. Indeed, I believe that the unformed image in my mind was more winsome to me than the visual presence was to them.

We have never seen God. There is no verified picture of Christ. But surely David was honest and not merely making a Prayer Book when he wrote, "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." And Peter rightly described hosts of Christians when he told of Jesus "Whom, not having seen, ye love."

## II

### EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS

#### *Memory or Imagination?*

**I**N my long backward look I find that the mind lingers most fondly over the events of early childhood. These recollections are also the most vivid. It may be that persons who have had extraordinary careers, who have heaved big events or been crushed by heavy sacrifices, recall those things most prominently. But one like myself, in whose life-stream there have been no Niagaras, will be apt to think most naturally of the springs in the distant hills, the early confluents where the waters of companionship first mingled, the stretches of still-water mirrored with the cloud-land of childish fancies, the overarching forests out of which leaped upon him his first terrors, and the little valleys which gave direction to his after career.

Perhaps there is a psychological explanation of our clearer remembrance of early events. To fasten things in recollection we must look at them long enough to fix our attention. The mnemonic acid must cut in. The attention of children is forced by the novelty of what passes. How the first track of the skate on virgin ice stands out! I can see it now after seventy summers have melted

it away. The first clap of thunder startles us, while the thousand subsequent strokes of Thor's hammer lose their distinctness in the prolonged roar of the storm.

The impressions of childhood are apt to repeat themselves in the impressions of after life. They become, as it were, fundamental draught-lines which we unconsciously follow in later thinking. Ruskin noted that Turner's great Alpine peaks showed in their contour and color a suggestion of the Yorkshire Hills amid whose minor beauties he learned to paint. A biographer of Tennyson, explaining the unabated freshness of the poet's sentiments and imagery, attributes them to his early experiences as an observer of nature and a connoisseur of men and things,—the shapes of his impressions having been so simple and decided that they never changed. "First emotions are life emotions; however the current flows, the source is the same."

There may also be a physical explanation of the vividness with which we retain the impression of our first things. A difficulty which beset the inventor of the phonographic disk was to find a substance which would most readily record the tiny sound-waves, and, at the same time, most securely retain the almost infinitesimal indentations they made. The inventor of the human brain had a similar problem. Everything we notice records itself, shall we say by a scratch, an indentation, producing some molecular change in the cellular tissue. The child's brain is marvellously quick to

take, and as marvellously endowed to retain, the impress of whatever touches it.

On the other hand, in old age the brain seems to have become too hard to receive the impression of ordinary things. Hence the commonly noticed failure of the aged to recall recent occurrences, though they are apt to be full of reminiscence of earlier happenings. My father, when he passed into his nineties, became unreliable in respect to current engagements. He could read for the third time a story without finding anything to remind him that he had travelled over the same pages before. But start him to repeat the thread of an old-time romance, to argufy the politics of Andrew Jackson or Henry Clay, to describe the costumes prevailing in the transition period between knee-buckles and blue swallow-tails with brass buttons, it was like reading from the age-yellowed pages of a newspaper of those days.

There is a dispute among writers as to the earliest age when the brain is sufficiently hardened to make passing impressions into permanent recollections. John Stuart Mill declared that he couldn't remember when he couldn't read Greek. He was not "an ordinary man," but one of those prodigies that do not concern any philosophy we may indulge in in this memoir. After questioning many lads and lasses, and also cross-examining some of my venerable friends in their at least twice-told tales, I incline to Jean Paul Richter's opinion,—“There are in men, in the beginning and at the end, as in

books, two blank bookbinders' leaves—childhood and old age.”

We do not ordinarily recall things that occurred before our third year. Yet we sometimes think we do. An experience of my own perplexes me.

On my brain film is a very vivid picture of a scene enacted when I was still a creeper. My playroom was on the second floor. How vividly I can see it now: the big rocker, the tiny crib, the green Venetian window blind! My nurse had put me on the window seat which reached to within a few inches of the sill. Over this sill I leaned until I lost my balance, rolled down the sloping roof of the piazza, and lodged in the broad trough of the gutter. Looking over the edge of this I saw the bright flowers of a rose-bush some ten feet below. With the perversity that has followed me through life, I tried to tumble down to them. The nurse's screams delighted me. Knowing that I was beyond her reach, I experienced my first thrill of personal liberty, which thrill was lessened neither by the narrow limitation of the gutter, nor by any fear of the unknown depth below me. I was not unlike certain anarchists who are so enamored of their independence that they are willing to roll into social perdition. I can to this day see the broad face of my Irish nurse, its prevailing red turned white with fright. I can recall her exact pose as she thrust her broad hips through the window opening. I have seen her a thousand times as she tried to crawl down to me, and rejoiced as often

with the recollection of how the slanting roof pitched her upon her nose, lessening by at least a skin's thickness the size of that member, which nature had already sufficiently curtailed to meet the most approved type of Hibernian beauty. She persisted in elongating herself until her fingers gripped my clothes. There she lay panting out her exhausted energy, until my father opportunely appeared upon the scene, grasped her by the feet, and drew us both to safety.

Now all this I could swear that I distinctly remember, were it not for a psychological difficulty. At that early age I could not have had a sufficiently developed sense of the ludicrous to appreciate the scene; yet the ludicrous element is its chief feature in my recollection. I must honestly account for my seeming precocity by the fact that I have often heard my father and others tell that story of my first misadventure. My imagination, excited by the picturesque adornments of the tale, became reality; just as in process engraving shadow pictures are cut into the plate.

I will not apologize for my childish illusion, since some of my most veracious friends, who have long since reached years of discretion, occasionally relate as their personal adventures things that my grandfather would claim to belong to his diary, recorded, alas! before the days of copyright. We all of us at times confound our memories with our imaginations, just as stereopticon lecturers mix their plates.

The late Lawrence Hutton told of a dinner he attended in London, at which James Russell Lowell made a speech whose very words Hutton could repeat. "Yet," adds Hutton, "I am assured that it never happened at all. I can find no one who ever heard of such a dinner." Carl Schurz frequently told of the immense impression made upon him at a Cabinet meeting by Mr. Lincoln's vivid description of the *Monitor's* fight in Hampton Roads. But he afterwards wrote,—“A careful scrutiny of the circumstances convinced me at last that I was not at the White House that day. This is one of the cases which have made me very anxious to verify my memory by all attainable outside evidence.”

I wonder—to compare little things with great—if errors similar to my early “recollections” may not have occurred in connection with some of the ancient traditions of the race. Even Herodotus, revered as the Father of History, runs the risk of being called the Father of Lies in narrating as his personal observation many things that certainly belonged to earlier legends, which legends themselves are now known to have been fables. Possibly some of the “eye-witnesses” of more sacred events have, all unconsciously, colored their actual visions with the popular beliefs or current interpretations of the facts, and have thus given us upon their saintly authority that which would not now pass the test of real historical verity.

Over the human mind there has always rested a

mirage-making atmosphere that brings remote things near, and is apt to transform arrant fancies into visual realities. The Crusaders, while still on the far distant Rhine hills, declared that they saw Jerusalem, even its walls and temple. English soldiers have sworn that in a recent battle in Belgium Saint George appeared in shining armor to encourage them. Indeed, the legend of Saint George's adventure seems to have been a mere revival of the olden Scandinavian story of Siegfried slaying a similar monster.

It has generally happened with the visions of the saints, especially of Mary and Christ, that they were reproductions of the pictures in the churches with which the ignorant visionaries were familiar. We may thus account for the many Descents into Hell recorded by our ancestors in such books as those of Roger of Hovenden and Matthew of Paris. Though Benvenuto Cellini was a most artistic liar in some respects, we need not think of him as deliberately prevaricating in his account of the apparition of Jesus in his cell in San Angelo. Such sights were undoubtedly real experiences in the souls of the observers; but so also the clouds and tree-tops seen in pools make actual pictures on the retina though they are not really down there in the water. The sources of the experience can be questioned without disparaging the honesty of the narrators. Sincerity is not a test of truth.

*Children's Lies.*

A noted preacher once said that all children are born liars. This is a Calvinistic slander, unless by a lie is meant everything that does not agree with outward fact, however innocent the utterer may be of any intention to deceive. With that unscientific and immoral definition, I must confess to have been a liar from infancy to at least adult years; for I have told stories, and stuck to them in spite of discipline, which astound me in the recollection.

A child, unless he is a dullard, is a natural romancer. This is due to the fact that his mind is more active than his senses, so that his outward knowledge fails to supply with actual facts his inner inventiveness. In after life there is a nearer balance between mental and sense perception. Indeed, in many cases the man becomes so engrossed in merely outward things that his imaginative faculty is partly atrophied from disuse. But in childhood it is the reverse. Limited actual observation of the world fails to satisfy the inner craving for excitement. The grain of fact runs out, so that the child pours into his mental hopper the grist of mere fancy.

In my short-clothes days we had not many picture books in the nursery, so we made our own pictures as we could. They were of such things as were never seen on earth nor in the waters under the earth. There was then little scientific "milk for babes," in the form of revelations of the wonders of the physical creation. The dinosaurs had not

yet crept up from their geological habitats and sprawled themselves over the pages of school-books. But we invented their rivals.

One night, after too much raisin cake for supper, I peopled the darkness with all sorts of fantastic shapes, which, as I now recall them, were quite Dantesque. One creature had the body of an enormous serpent, the claws of a cat and the bill of a bird. This latter function was armed with a row of teeth that would have been the envy of any bully of the primeval jungle. Of course, I made myself slay the monster. But the tussle was tremendous and agonizing. No doubt the pillows and coverlets would have shown how I wriggled away from the crunch of the monster; how I caught and held from me his great claws; how I fastened his jaws wide open with my dagger just at the moment they were about to snap me into two. I have never had a more realistic experience. As I tell the story I feel again the fright that almost paralyzed me as I grappled with the fearsome object, the chill and heat that alternately coursed up and down my spinal column during the conflict, and the enthusiasm of the victory.

The next day I told the story to my brothers. A governess overhearing it was doubtless horrified with the conviction that she had in training a child of the devil who had spent the night with infernal playmates. She reported the matter to my father, to whom I insisted that I was telling only the truth. Upon which, he being more orthodox than psycho-

logic, advised me to paint on my imagination a place of fire and brimstone as something likely to be real in my future experience.

But what is reality? Simply what one realizes. A thought that sways me, a fantasy that carries me away, a mere dream, if you will, is more real to me than a cyclone through which I have slept soundly. The material part of a sunset is only dust and mist particles, but the glory of it is an immensely greater fact, for all that it is assayed only in my sentiment. Surely beauty, grandeur, sublimity, are as real as the mountains or the sea on which they are painted with the brush of my æsthetic feeling. Science is a reality; yet it is not an outstanding series of facts; only our conception of an order in the universe that may have no more truth back of it than the ancient cosmogonies that have floated away like other mists of the early morn. Thales was not the less a philosopher and less worthy of his title of Father of Science because his four elements, earth, air, fire and water, were not elements at all. Let us be just to those who encircled the world with the river Oceanus as a watery horizon; who saw through the phosphorescent waves the gleaming trident of Neptune commanding the seas; who turned their prows in fright from the cave where Æolus kept the tempests; who read the entrails of beasts as the hieroglyphic prophecies of future events, and followed the wandering of Ulysses among the isles of Calypso and Circe, and over the pasture lands of the sun, as credulously as we follow Stanley among the pigmy

tribes of Africa or Nansen among the floating islands that girt the North Pole. Homer, Hesiod and Ovid, the authors of the Babylonian and Hebrew stories of creation, Virgil, Milton and Dante, and the singers of the Sagas of the Northland were only the dreamers of the race during its childhood or adolescence, yet what they told became the determinative forces of much of human history.

We are now critically examining the old Bible records with the purpose to reject whatever cannot demonstrate its literal exactness. Criticism should be careful lest in its iconoclastic zeal it destroy genuine and important history, namely, that of the convictions—dreams, if you will—of the men who once lived under the spell of ancient oracles. We shall thus lose more of value than we shall gain if we succeed in melting the seals off all apocryphal scripture. Our very superstitions belong to the history of truth; they are essential to the biography of humanity and cannot be omitted without detriment to the fidelity of the record.

### *A Young Anarchist.*

That I did not grow up to become an anarchist was not due to my first school-teacher. She was a lovely woman, soft-eyed, soft-cheeked, soft-handed, soft-spoken, all because she was a soft-hearted creature. She was a rigid disciplinarian, according to her code, but not in administration. She was perpetually inflicting punishments that didn't punish. When she scolded, which she thought she was doing

vehemently, she was like Bottom as the lion, who would "roar you as gently as any sucking dove."

I had done something wrong, and was made to hold out my hand for the due reward of my deeds. A tiny whip of the size of a broomwisp and the weight of a shoe-string fell thrice upon my flesh. I was disappointed. I thought a whipping was of more consequence than that. I felt that my teacher hadn't credited me with pluck. She ought at least to have made me wince, stiffen my lips, and grind my heel on the floor. I was underrated, insulted, and that in the presence of another little fellow who thought he had licked me the day before.

I watched my chance to merit a heavier punishment, something one could feel, and be willing to talk about afterward if only he didn't cry. I perpetrated some awful, horrible, atrocious bit of naughtiness—the adjectives describe my purpose, not the deed, although I have forgotten what it was. Reformation through corporal punishment having so signally failed in my case, the mistress endeavored to shame me out of my wickedness. She threatened to make me sit in the next room with the girls. Through the open door I caught a loving glance from one of the little misses who happened to live next door to me, and of whom I was very fond. That glance was, as in more classic instances, my undoing. I at once repeated my crime, and had a delightful half-hour holding the hand of my in-amorata under the fold of her frock.

I was at that time laying the foundation for my

ideas of government. The "powers that be," such as Kings, Policemen, Generals and Schoolma'ams, it seemed to me were ordained only to break the monotony of other people's lives by providing them with new sensations—the first plank in the platform of my political economy.

I was encouraged by my experience to pursue further the investigation of this great problem. I committed another offense. Now I was to be visited with the utmost severity, put through the final degree, until my soul should be racked into submission.

I was shut up in the dark closet! Had I ever heard of the saying I should have expected to read over that dungeon portal, "Abandon hope ye that enter here." I anticipated the solitude of ear-splitting silence; but the cheerful voice of a darkey mammy singing in the adjacent kitchen prevented that catastrophe. I set out to explore with my hands my unknown environs. What awful recesses, deep caverns, ghostly bats and unimaginable things ought to be in the dark closet! Suddenly my fingers slipped into something soft. I smelt the stuff. Goody! Pumpkin-pie! I was incarcerated in the pantry! Never was a mouse happier. I did not ask to see. Touch, smell, taste, were all the senses I needed. I only feared that the mistress would relent of her cruelty to me before I had scraped the bottom crust.

I served my time in the pantry cell, and was led out into liberty. My sleeve, with which I had

wiped my mouth, presented the annals of a solitary confinement with which the story of Silvio Pellico in the Spielberg and that of Picciola and his flower do not compare. But the eyes of my teacher were so full of tears over my sufferings that she didn't notice the sleeve.

This method of imparting to a youngster proper ideas of Law and Order, due respect for Authority, and a wholesome realization that "the way of the transgressor is hard," might do for the training of rabbits, but not for young hyenas and foxes, to which ancestral races most of us humans seem to belong. That school might have been preparatory to an after course in the university of Blackwell's Island.

In spite of modern theories, and judging from my own case, a better discipline would have been a series of sound spankings laid on by a masculine hand; thus imparting intelligence and discipline by what the scientists would call the Process of Induction, or which the metaphysicians would, perhaps, regard as a practical application of the *a posteriori* method.

### *First Physical Pain.*

John Morley quotes approvingly the words of George Meredith, "We lose a proper sense of the richness of life, if we do not look back on the scenes of our youth with imaginative warmth." One of my recollections does not lack the sensation of warmth. I was scarcely able to run when that exploit

brought me to my first experience of bodily suffering. Since then I have felt most of the screws on the rack of torture, from toothache to gout; but the terror of such agonies has been somewhat mitigated by the memory of primitive discipline.

It was before the general introduction of butlers' pantry sinks piped for hot water; at least such an Etnean supply had not yet been put into our house. The kitchen goddess was accustomed to bring into the dining-room an immense caldron of boiling water in which the dishes were washed before being ornamentally disposed on the shelf. Unfortunately I encountered the maid as she was bearing this portable lavatory through a narrow passage, with the result that several gallons of the steaming fluid deluged me. A great scar on my neck is a fragmentary memorial of the accident; but I do not have to look at that to revive the remembrance of the agony of forty days. It helps me to a degree of equanimity in keeping a promise I recently made to an Italian priest that I would read a little book he had given me as a warning against my heretical tendencies. It was Saint Alfonso Maria de Liguori's *Meditations*, one chapter of which is entitled *Della Fine*, and describes purgatorial "fire in the eyes, fire in the mouth, fire everywhere." During my lifetime I have had a delight in the smell of castor oil and lime-water, the mixture that solaced my pains during those dreary weeks when I lay like a snake in his den literally casting my old skin and taking on a new one. That early experience has undoubtedly

made me more heroic as I have often been metaphorically in hot water since.

*First Contact With Greatness.*

The residence of General Winfield Scott was not far from our home. I had never as yet looked upon the renowned warrior, but my faculty of appreciation was stunned by the reports of his deeds. He had taken "with his arms" the city of Mexico. What tremendous arms he must have! When my father read at morning prayers how a king of Babylon had "carried away all Jerusalem," I wondered if he or Scott were the bigger. I knew about Gulliver and also about the giant that Jack killed, and was prepared to expect some tremendous vision when the General should arrive home from the war. I was disappointed when I saw him. To be sure he was a big man, made broader by the epaulettes that parapeted his shoulders, and taller by his cocked hat and feathers; and the fanfare of trumpets and drums that played "Lo, the Conquering Hero Comes" seemed to blow him up to greater dimensions. But he was really no bigger than the giant I had seen at Barnum's.

I imagined that there must be some terrible power condensed somewhere in his body. Maybe he would explode at times as gunpowder does. So while the General was passing in the procession I kept behind my slightly bigger brother for safety. As there was no explosion beyond the outcries of the crowd I felt that greatness was a cheat.

A few days later my brother and I were chasing our ball in front of the General's house. By chance the ball rolled through the hedge into the demesne of the terrible man. What should we do? My brother was as daring as I was impudent, so he yielded to my urging, summoned all his courage into his spine, and crawled through the hedge. Horror of horrors! The colossus himself was sitting in a garden chair close to the hedge. He seized my brother by the waistband of his breeches, and lifted him over the hedge to the sidewalk. "My lad," said he, "you shouldn't bombard a man in his own castle. Suppose your ball had been a cannon-ball and had struck me!"

While I breathed more freely since no terrible thing had happened, I felt a sort of contempt for Great Scott. If the mighty man had only crushed a bone or two in my brother's body, or flung the intruder over the top of the house, it would have been in keeping with my ideal of greatness. But, think of it! He had only broken the waistband of his breeches! My awe was punctured. Some day I would pepper the General with my bean-thrower.

My brother had his revenge. A day or two after the General stopped us little tots on the street.

"See here, my lad! Aren't you the boy that invaded my lawn?"

How my muscles stiffened! The General laughed heartily, and patting my brother on the head, said kindly, "You must be more cautious next time, and not have so many pins stuck in your belly band."

What is greatness? The question thus started in my mind has never yet been satisfactorily answered, and few biographies help toward the solution.

*First Lesson in Patriotism.*

I was perhaps six years old when I received the first impression that I was living in a world of antagonisms. Everything external had heretofore gone smoothly. Everybody chucked me under the chin. I hadn't yet read about Blue Beard, and wouldn't have believed in the existence of such a monster if I had known the story. But suddenly I was made to realize that society is divided into factions; that nations are like diverse species of wild beasts, snarling and snapping at one another for possession of the bones of self-interest. As in a spasm, my puny soul muscles suddenly became knotted for conflict.

The change came about in this way. My old grandmother had come to visit us. She had a wonderful face, full of kindness, eloquent with wrinkles, framed in a big white cap that, like a nimbus of light, covered her head to the chin. She was a splendid story-teller. Nearing her own second childhood she had that leisurely garrulous style that so pleases first childhood. While she was in our house fairies seemed to look into the windows at night, and the chimney swallows twittered like baby angels back of the fire-board. She talked about birds and bunnies, about good children and loving mammas, until one would imagine the whole world

a harmless Paradise where there was not even a garter-snake or a wart-toad to harm us.

But one afternoon she took me to the top of the house, and helped me climb a tall chair. She bade me look far away to a white gleam of water.

“That’s it,” said she.

For a long time she gazed. I thought she had forgotten me.

“What is it you see, grandma?”

“Why, that is the Sound off yonder. I wanted to see it once more before I died. When I was a wee little girl, about as big as you are now, I one day walked with my father from way back in the country to the shore to get a sight of the old British prison ship *Jersey*. My uncle was confined and tortured on that horrible vessel for months during the Revolutionary War.”

I can never forget that hour, as I stood on the high chair, grinding my elbows against the window-sill, with my eyes strained toward a spot in the direful distance, and listened to what she told me of the trying days of her girlhood; of her father’s property ruined, her relatives killed; of how John ——— got his wooden leg, and Peter ——— lost his eyes in battle and went all the rest of his life totally blind. When I went to bed that night I could not sleep, but rehearsed all the pictures she had painted, deepening in my imagination the blood-red colors, and twisting into worse contortions the writhing horrors of the battle-field. I have since seen thousands of the wounded, and, as I

write there lie before me the morning journals with casualty statistics from the bloodiest war-field of all history ; but my grandmother's story cut deeper into my heart, because it was my first impression of the age-long story of "man's inhumanity to man." I can now, after all these years, when I am as old as she was then, still feel the touch of the old lady's hand on my head, and hear her voice as she bade me never forget what it cost to make our country. Hundreds of times since I have seen that prison ship floating in the lagoons of light on the horizon, and have watched the clouds sailing in like the navies of invaders. Some of the iron of that grand Revolutionary soul must have gotten into my blood, and, rusting there, produced a sort of chronic patriotic irritability. That day I became a citizen, rather than fifteen years later when I passed my majority and cast my first vote.

*First Flare of the Grand Flame.*

I was about six years old when my heart burst with that spontaneous combustion called Love. The warmth of the flame was so congenial that, twenty years later, when I was consumed with a greater fire of the same sort, I thought at least smilingly of the earlier experience.

She was a beautiful child ;—so I then thought ; though in after years, when I had become more artistic regarding physiognomical symmetries and proportions, I concluded that she must have been copied from some badly patched pattern of the gen-

uine Venus. But the tendrils of my affectionate nature had to have something to climb upon, else, like those of certain other plants, they should grow soggy and moribund. My Sylvia rescued me from such a fatality, as vines have been saved by the proximity of a rock or bramble bush.

We two played together, kissed through many dozens of wreaths—as we heard they did in the Orient, vowed eternal fidelity, and protested against the snail-like progress of the years, which, instead of the speeding steeds of Queen Mab, would bring us to the connubial Paradise.

But the web which my little favorite was weaving about me, being as yet only the thinnest gossamer threads, was suddenly broken. The calamity thus came about. We were playing at the top of a long flight of stairs. On the landing at our backs was a tall grandfather's clock. We had been warned of the danger of examining too intimately such ancestral remains. Who knew what family skeleton might not leap out of it? The monotonous ticking seemed to us like the scratching of ghosts, and when the hammer struck the hour on the coiled wire sounding-spring, it seemed to knell out the hour of doom.

But my inamorata was a true daughter of Pandora, and against my frantic appeals she opened the great door of the clock. She was swinging the long pendulum to make it go faster and hasten our halcyon day, when the entire fabric toppled over. It crashed down the flight of stairs, carrying us both

along with it in the *mêlée* of its broken case and disjointed "innards."

My bruised head and well-skinned elbows and knees in turn wounded my sentimental feeling; while the caterwauling of my lady—who I jealously noted was unhurt—seemed to add insult to the injury she had done me. My belief in her angelic qualities was quickly changed into a suspicion that she was a little imp of darkness whom I had better avoid. Moreover, her parents, standing amid the ruins of their old heirloom, vented their wrath upon me as the male, and therefore the responsible, culprit; the father even gave vent to a cuss-word about "that awkward boy."

I was completely disillusioned; but for a long time was more thoroughly dejected than I have ever been with any subsequent defeat of the "grand passion" on a similar field.

The love-twitterings of babes; how trifling! you say. Not so. Such things are not to be measured by the size of their causes or consequences, but by their relation to the capacity for endurance possessed by those who are subject to them. Possibly the suffering of a fly being devoured piecemeal by a spider is not surpassed by the torture of a human victim thrown to the lions. A child's soul may be a tiny thing compared with its subsequent development, but its joys and sorrows, its hopes and despairs, are not less significant to itself, nor less determinative of character and disposition, than are the delights and griefs, the triumphs and defeats of

after youth and manhood. When in later life we review our whole campaign, what we set down as only preliminary skirmishes loom up as the greater battles, especially if we were wounded in the earlier combats.

### *Loneliness.*

Most children probably get their first real shivers of loneliness when they read of Robinson Crusoe on his desolate island. I was prepared to appreciate the solitude described in that book by some previous sensations of my own.

When about eight years old I was sent into the country for a vacation. As a relative was to meet me at the railroad station and drive me across the country to his farm, I went alone in the train. On alighting at the platform called a depot I found no one who knew me. I waited an hour looking down the roads, but saw nothing more cheerful than the gathering dusk. A passing farmer gave me the direction, but as he was going the other way I got no lift.

That farmer's description of the road I must tramp is still my most vivid itinerary of travel, although as a globe-trotter I have memorized such things pertaining to almost all the longitudes and latitudes. Here it is,—said the man:

“A half-mile down the track, my boy, is a cross wood-road. Turn to the left by a lumber-pile. Go a quarter of a mile, then wind about by an old deserted house. No, don't be afraid; there are no

bogies there. Footpath across a big meadow and into the woods. A half-mile through them pines, and there you are. White house. Can't miss it. Ain't any other in sight. Good-bye, sonny! Luck to you!"

A more dismal Thank you! than mine was never wheezed from a human throat. I cough to think of it even after these years.

That half-mile of railroad track! The road through Siberia is not longer. I counted every tie I stepped on, just to crowd out other thoughts that the very winds were blowing into my brain. I walked the rail to convince myself that I still had my nerve with me, and wasn't going to be thrown off my balance by ——

But what was that? An express roaring around a curve, its headlight catching sight of me like the eye of some wild beast; and I was on a steep embankment. There was nothing for me but to give it the right of way. In doing so I slid down into a patch of blackberry bushes that lay in ambush for me at the bottom of the structure. I can now almost detect the scratches among the wrinkles on my hands.

Scrambling back to the track I came to a cross-road; but there was no lumber-pile such as my guide had told me of. My poor brain began to swirl with uncertainty. My bewilderment was not relieved by the counsel of a grunting woodchuck, a beast I had never seen, nor by the cawing of some belated crows, which I thought might be the buz-

zards such as I had heard sometimes waited for a man to die that they might pick his bones.

I sat down to try to think. If that wood-pile had only been here! Maybe I must walk a long way to another cross-road. Maybe I shouldn't. I pulled up some grass. It was yellow, half killed by something that had lain on it. Examination showed the outlines of the wood-pile which had been removed. The birds that Columbus saw on approaching land were not more welcome than that yellow grass.

It was spooky dark when I started along the wheel-road through the woods. Yet it was a path of revelations. I never knew before how much a stump resembles a bear; nor what a hideous, crunching, elephantine noise a jack-rabbit makes when he jumps through the dry leaves; nor how a chipmunk can elongate himself into a ten-foot snake when he darts across a path; nor what flocks of ghosts the evening zephyr can imitate when it sighs its way between the trees and over the crackly dried grass; nor what solid things shadows may become; nor what fiendish voices the screech-owls have when they wake up for their nighting.

There loomed up the outline of a house. The deserted house! No bogies there? If there were none, why did the man speak of them? Some folks must believe they were there. And I must cross the lawn and go around the house! I tried to run, but my legs were paralyzed. An old well-sweep shook itself at me, and tried to lasso me with its chain and bucket. A gate leading to the back lot swore at

me with its creaking hinges. The terrors of the open field made me haste to the shelter of the woods a little way off, and the woods frightened me back to the open.

At length I entered that most fearsome forest. The old pines were crippled giants chasing me with their broken limbs for clubs. A fox scudded almost between my legs in his flight from something worse than himself.

What that something was I was soon to know. There was a low growl or whine. A black outline of something moving. Two sparks of fire about as far apart as the eyes of a panther might be. I sank down.

The next moment I was conscious of a cold nose on my cheek and a warm tongue licking my face. Then the beast danced about me with the glee of one who has found his long-lost brother. The next moment he dashed ahead, and barking, led the way along a path that I could scarcely see, out into the meadow, across a pasture lot, and up to the farmhouse door. With ecstatic yelps he announced my coming to my relative, who had mistaken by a day the date for my arrival.

Almost every boy who ventures beyond the apron strings has had similar exploits. That is the reason I mention it. How lasting are the impressions such commonplace things make upon us! Ever since that night I have felt that dogs were in a sort of kinship with me. We own them by more than property right, as a man owns his children, his friends,

his neighbors, his fellow-workers. In the Happy Hunting Grounds, the Indian quite naturally believes

“His faithful dog shall bear him company.”

Query:—Did that dog have any prognosis of my coming, and so go out to meet me? Is the brute soul so little emerged from the realm of the universal subconscious, which psychologists imagine to be the realm of all knowledge, that the creature knew intuitively what his master had not learned by the mail? A dog that I now own sits looking at me with great soulful eyes. Is he trying to catch on to my thoughts, wishing that he too might be intelligent and understand me; or is he rather yearning to tell me something I do not know,—something he sees in those depths which are clear to him, but which we humans cannot discern because our restless intelligence so frets the surface of simple and more certain knowledge? Maybe dogs' eyes are pools of divination to search which men have not yet acquired the art.

How many times in my dreams, mostly waking dreams, I have tramped over that old country road! When stranded in a foreign port and hearing only the babble of strange tongues; when, having missed my travelling companions, I have sailed alone over unfamiliar seas; when I have been cut off from my caravan by intruding Arabs; when I have been mystified and lost in the problem of life's great road, where it leads to, and who engineered it,—

then I seem to be travelling again along that old road, wondering whether I am up against stumps or bears, being chewed by a panther or kissed by a dog.

*The World Breaking In.*

It is difficult for young children to think of the world as different from their own immediate environment, except that it is larger. At that age we are like primitive men who imagined that the cave-cliff on which they lived was the centre-pole of the universe, and that the very stars swung round it. If his home is a happy one, the child conceives that the everywhere must also be beautiful, well-furnished, friendly and safe. It is not until some one with whom he is familiar comes home mutilated, or sends the sad tidings, that he realizes that civilization is still crude and dangerous.

I was about eight years old when my disillusioning came. A brother, some twelve years older than I, was taken with the "California fever," that epidemic of 1849, and joined one of the pioneer companies for a tramp across the continent to the land of gold. After the party, which consisted of some sixty men, had left the Mississippi Valley nothing was heard of it for some months. Our imagination filled in the blank with all that our elders could tell about unfordable rivers, trackless forests, savage Indians, wild beasts, serpents, worn-out clothes and scant food.

At length came a batch of letters. They had been mailed from the most remote post-office on the fron-

tier, to which they had been brought by members of the company who were unable or unwilling to endure the terrors of the Great Desert and the uncharted defiles of the Rockies. Sickness had invaded the camp, several had died, wagons were abandoned, mules perished of starvation and were eaten. Nearly all of the party abandoned the enterprise and struck out for home.

My brother and two companions pushed on, not perhaps braver than the others, but because they believed that the Pacific was as reachable as the Mississippi, and the dangers ahead no worse than those they had escaped.

Many weeks passed without further tidings. From the stories brought by those who had returned we abandoned hope. At night I would lie awake, seeing in my overwrought fancy the most terrific scenes. On the dim walls or on the moonlit patches of the floor I painted the pictures suggested by our fears; my brother starving in some desolate spot, or falling under the weight of his pack, or torn to pieces by curious monsters of the wilderness. The sigh of the night winds was translated into the hiss of the Indian arrow that felled him.

At length letters came. They were sent around Cape Horn or across the Isthmus of Panama. He had reached El Dorado. His account of the journey confirmed our worst suspicions, except that of his ultimate fate. During the long evenings we would sit in front of the great wood-fire, with a few of our neighbors who dropped in for the exciting news,

while my father read the thrilling descriptions of adventure, hardship and hazard; of how the three lonely men had disagreed regarding the best trail through the awful solitudes of the Sierras; how the little party had broken up, two choosing the trail which the narrator had deemed impossible and pushed on alone, until through a thousand menacing accidents the three found one another in a mining camp near Sacramento.

Although I was safely at home, my intimacy with my brother and my love for him made his story a part of my own biography. I felt it all, for I had lived through it all, or rather it had lived itself through me, touching every fibre of my soul, even as it made my blood run hot and cold. I was now a denizen of a world where civilization was still in the making. I have never been able to divest myself—I will not say merely of the knowledge—but of the sensation that the comparative luxury that has surrounded me is like that of a caravan moving over a desert where dangers lurk under the stones or peer out from hostile forms not far away.

### *Boyish Adventure.*

Another recollection has trailed itself down through my manhood. A comrade and I, in spite of many warnings and forbiddings, had gone down to the river. What boys of eight or nine could resist the lure of a flat-bottomed boat on a rippleless though swiftly moving stream? The river was narrow and crooked, with as many turns in it as there

were kinks and folds in the fabled serpent that strangled the priest of Apollo. That the stream was not charted in our primary geography made it as much of a temptation as another River of Doubt to a certain adventurous personage. We were fascinated by the smooth drifting under the flashing of the sunset through the shadows which great forest trees laid across the current and were carried by it several miles down-stream.

We forgot the slipping away of both time and distance until a sharp clap of thunder and the sudden darkening of the sky broke our reveries. We turned about and headed up-stream. We tugged at the heavy oars until lungs and muscles gave out, but could make no progress. The rain came down in torrents thickening the darkness of the premature night, except when the lightning fusilladed as if we had come upon a masked battery worked by demons. Utterly exhausted we had to let her drift; whither we did not know. The water filled the boat shin deep. We were drenched through the skin. Our bones seemed all marrow.

We knew that there was a big dam and a high waterfall a few miles below. Would we drift over it? Would they fish out our bodies? But from the maw of this Charybdis we were saved by a twist in the current that swirled the boat under a clump of alder-bushes growing out of the bank. We clung to the branches until we warped the craft into a tiny cove. For at least two hours we sat there with "chaos and old night" roaring about us.

Yet—I record this with some wonder—I had thus far no fear. The sublimity of the flashing lightning, the crashing thunder, the crackling boughs, the deluge “hish” of the rain, completely absorbed the mind. I understand how tiny birds are charmed by the glaring eyes and white fangs of a boa-constrictor, and how soldiers after the first volley are fascinated by the fury of the battle, and don’t want to run.

Near midnight the storm had passed. Did the moon ever before shine so serenely? Schools of fishes broke water about us. Night-hawks cut the air in circles over our heads. A muskrat swam near to us, glanced at us with his beady eyes, disowned our company, dived and came up under the muddy bank.

Now it was that, all danger having passed, my fright began. The terror of what might have happened but for the Providence of the alder-bush was crushing. I feel the chill of it now in telling about it. Fortunately voices were heard hallooing our names; and in a little while we were put to bed with hot mint tea and kindly scoldings to restore the cockles of our hearts.

Since then I have been lashed fast to the bridge of an ocean steamer plowing through a midnight storm, have looked down the gullet of Vesuvius, and stood dizzied above the mighty cañons of the Rockies; but that night has always had for me the precedence in scenic thrills. A few days ago I motored along the bank of that same little river with

an interest akin to that of a veteran revisiting Waterloo or Gettysburg.

*A Sin its Own Cure.*

I am happy to record that I can recall but one instance in my life when I deliberately swore. That I never addicted myself to the use of that censored part of the dictionary may have been partly due to an experience when I was about eight years old, in which the penalty came so close upon the heels of the offense that it left the moral very vividly exposed. The whip of the gods so quickly lashed me that I have run through my life crying, "*Procul, O procul este profani.*"

I had gone to a swamp to gather sweet-flag or calamus root. I was perched upon a tiny bog in the waste of mud and water, trying to pull up an especially promising stalk. Notwithstanding all my expenditure of strength and grunting the calamus would not come up. My comrade, a boy several years older than I, was in a similar endeavor on a neighboring clump of dirt and roots. As a stimulus to his muscles he let out a few words swollen with the infinities. Whether he invoked the celestial or Tartarian powers I do not now recall; but his language seemed to be charged with some sort of talismanic efficacy, for he landed a splendid root. Putting my hands deep in the water I repeated his formula. My stalk instantly gave way. So did the bog, and I was precipitated backwards into a pool of slime and water. But for the timely help of my

comrade these reminiscences might never have been written.

Going home in my disreputable plight I was afraid to meet the inquiries of those who had taught me the Third Commandment, lest a second and worse penalty might follow. I, however, arranged an account of my misadventure which carefully left out the heart of the story. Whether my wet and bedraggled condition or the shame in my conscience was the stronger motive, I cannot now say; but I was seized with such remorse that I made a solemn vow to keep my mouth clean of like pollution.

A little later I consoled myself quite religiously on hearing a text from the Book of Job;—"God looketh upon men, and if any shall say, I have sinned and perverted that which is right, and *it profited me not*, he shall deliver his soul from going into the pit . . . Lo, these things worketh God oftentimes with man to bring back his soul from the pit."

All theology aside, I look back to that mud bath as the teaching of a real providential lesson. Perhaps at that almost infantile age I could not have appreciated any higher ethical appeal. Why should I not think that the Great Father who cares for sparrows and babies had equally led my ignorance?

A half century later I related this early experience to my father, who had then reached the years of reminiscence at which I myself have now attained. He matched me with a like experience of his own when a bare-footed lad on the paternal

farm. He had been taught by his parents a puritanical abhorrence of card-playing. The rigid prohibition of the "poisoned pasteboards" had the usual effect of forbidden fruit. He secured a pack of the contraband stuff. One Sunday morning, when the rest of the family were at the village church, he and his brother climbed into an empty sugar hogshead, such as adorned almost all well-furnished farmsteads at that day, and were often used for supplementary cisterns. It was open only at the top, so that the sky looked down upon the miscreants like the eye of God. The lads had scarcely begun their game when there came a frightful crash. If the heavens were not split, their ears were. The hogshead rocked as a Viking's ship under a stroke of Thor's hammer. A second blow knocked it over, tumbling the boys into the open and scattering the ground with fifty-two evidences of their guilt.

The boys were, however, somewhat relieved on finding that their assailant was not a veritable Jupiter Tonans, but a neighboring farmer who had made a fence-rail do the part of a bolt of lightning. The man was very gracious to the culprits, and promised not to tell on them, on condition of their keeping a pledge not to repeat the same iniquity.

My father said that a thousand times in after life the shivers of that fright had gone through him. For eighty years he kept the pledge. But at length the venerable man fell from his high resolve. When failing sight had deprived him of his lifelong solace

in reading, he yielded to the temptation of his grandchildren and learned to play solitaire. He used to tell the story of his youthful misadventure for the sake of drawing a “moral”;—“Boys, never do in secret what you would be ashamed of having others know.”

This led to a very wise rule in our home,—“If you want to play cards don’t hide away in your bedrooms, but bring them down into the family living-room.” Thus the old hogshead story became one of our ethical heirlooms.

### III

#### BOARDING-SCHOOL DAYS

*Near to Nature's Heart.*

**A**FTER some years of widowhood my father married again. My stepmother was an excellent woman. I record with gratitude the love and care she wasted on me.

I say "wasted" because, with all her accomplishments and fidelity to my minutest needs, I felt that she was not my mother. As I looked at the lead-pencil picture which I had idealized into that of perfect motherhood, and thought of her whom I had canonized in my reverent affection, I regarded my new maternal guardian as in some sort an intruder. Perhaps if I had remembered my true mother, and then tried to see how the substitute tried honestly and lovingly to take her place, I might have felt differently.

When my father saw the drift of things he very wisely sent me away from home. He had an old friend, a man broken in health by the confinement of a city school, who had migrated to a neighboring State, and set up an academy among the hills. My father thought it would be a good experience for me if I made the journey thither unattended, although I was only ten.

My natural timidity and a natural curiosity regarding what was about to befall me en route kept

me wide awake the entire night before I set out. No Arctic explorer starting for uncharted ice-channels had more anxiety as to what he might encounter than I had when I was ticketed through over various railroads, across ferries, committed to the hazards of city transfers and mountain stage-coaches, and finally consigned to the tender mercies of strange schoolmasters, not knowing whether they would turn out to be Squeerses or Dr. Arnolds, and to the unanticipated savageries of a tribe of boys who would doubtless tattoo me with the insignia of their own mode of life. How often since when starting on a voyage I have imagined myself ten years old, in my short trousers, saying Good-bye! to all I knew! That was the biggest of all my tramps abroad, although, like Puck, I have since almost "put a girdle round the earth."

The boarding-school to which I was sent was typical of such institutions at that day. It would seem crude and laughably unattractive to a boy brought up in one of our more modern palatial brain nurseries, where education is presumed to be by less arduous processes than formerly; where the *c-duco*-ing is accomplished by fascinating the young faculties to come forth of themselves through the influence of elegant artistic and literary surroundings, while the body is developed by spectacular games and well-plumbed bath-tubs.

My school was located in the tiniest village that was ever christened with a post-office name. It was hidden away on the edge of our western wilderness,

surrounded by rough and picturesque hills, which were torn into ravines by rushing streams, and horizoned by a range of glorious mountains. We were "close to nature's heart"—a spot, I maintain, better adapted for a nestling mind than the suburbs of the best university.

We boys there became early acquainted with the features of our Eldest Mother, wrinkled with rocks and caverns, yet laughing at us with a hundred sparkling streams. We learned to love and understand her many voices: the shrill call of the eagle and the chirp of the squirrel; the roar of cataracts and the thin whisper of the winds among the pine-tree needles; the thunder of the falling oak and the patter of its dropping acorns. We learned her varying moods as in winter's storms and autumn's silences we roamed the primeval forests that were often waist deep with the mould of a hundred vegetable generations; climbed the precipices which were dizzying except to goats and boys; tracked the deer and the field-mice by their footprints.

Knowledge of nature acquired not scientifically, but sympathetically, is the best foundation for culture of mind and heart. Without it our after philosophies will be like dry rivers, good for boundary lines of thought, but not refreshing to the soul; our æsthetics, whether of artist or poet, will be only painted fruit. Nature is life. Until we learn her language and commune with her the intelligence in us will be but arid stuff, and our emotions like the hopping of wing-clipped birds.

Thoreau describes a certain new experience of familiarity with nature in her grander moods as akin to that which religionists call "The New Birth." I can then never be sufficiently grateful for that early "conversion," when the Spirit of all visible things seemed to take me by the hand, and say, "Come with me! Love me! Revere me! Feel my august presence; but never be afraid of me!"

I attribute much of my after contentment in life, especially the feeling of being at home in the most solitary, out-of-the-way places, to the tuition of those days. I can say that since I was ten years old I have scarcely ever been lonely, except in the city on a summer's day when the family is out of town. If my solitude allows me a glimpse of nature I find it a cozy den.

To the open life of those school-days I owe also a happy bondage to the sense of the sublime, which has given me many delights. I am a child again if I can look out upon a wide expanse; or watch the windings of some noble river washing the bases of precipices as if they were the feet of the gods; or wander in the long aisles of the forest, which Nature built for her first temple; or follow the eagle, frightened by human voices, taking refuge in the depths of the sky—an image of our thoughts when they vanish toward the Infinite; or stand worshipping God before some Great White Throne of cloud that rises from the horizon. How these old-time sights and sounds repeat themselves in endless panorama, in unbroken oratorio, as now from my bun-

galow "in depth of wood embraced," the cradle of my second childhood, I gaze out toward the sunset. I used to long for the poetic gift, that I might sing out the songs which nature sings into me; but I am made more than content with my limitation in this regard by the conviction that the truly sublime transcends all expression; that the attempt to verbalize it is apt to destroy the feeling itself, as we make birds fly away when we try to imitate their call.

I am confident of this much at least, that the sense of the sublime is totally distinct from ability to express it. I travelled for a few days with an American gentleman who one morning stood enraptured before Mont Blanc, his face pale with his emotion; but all he said was, "Gee! But that's fine! Ain't it?" I knew an old Indian who would sit motionless for hours looking off a cliff, and make no utterance except a grunting "Ugh!" A spiritual affinity he with Saint Paul who could only exclaim, "Oh, the height, the depth!" when the vision of the Infinite rolled before him.

Of this dissociation of feeling and the power of expression I am reminded by one of my teachers at the old academy who has since attained some distinction as a poet. He once wrote a beautiful ode on Music. Presuming that such a man's soul was a spring-head of harmony, of which his verses were but the outward trickle, I invited him to visit me when I had also for a guest a lady of exquisite musical talent, both as a pianist and singer. Her re-

citals affected my poetical friend about as much as a nightingale affects the stump upon which she sits when her song fills the grove. My friend told me afterward that he could not distinguish one note from another. Either his two ears had been originally tuned in different keys, so that to him the most exact harmonies were tumbled into discords, or else his soul had never been born into the world where Orpheus lived.

This gentleman could also write Thanatopsian verses about the grandeurs of nature, but I am sure he saw none. His work was rhythmic patchwork suggested by other poets, thus making a new garment for nature, but he was innocent of all knowledge of her naked form. He spouted Wordsworth's *Excursion*, but never cared to take a woodland walk. He recited the ode to Mont Blanc, but was oblivious to the grand monolithic mountain that upheld our portion of the sky.

I am grateful to my Creator who, seeing me not worthy of both gifts—that of feeling and that of expression—gave me the former; that He opened my eyes staring wide toward the Transcendent, though He left me tongue-tied; and that He sent me to the old academy at the base of an American Olympus, where I was encouraged to talk with my gods. What if I only prattled at them, and understood not a word they said to me! I at least caught the sweetness and depth of their voices, though I knew them, perhaps, only as a dog knows his master's whistle.

I have a half-pagan conviction that these divin-

ities understand us, as mothers understand the inarticulate utterances of their babes. The incomprehensible powers of wood and stream, of mountain, sea and sky, sometimes seem to catch us to their unseen arms, to absorb our littleness into their greatness, and soothe us with the spell of their own immovable peace.

### *Old-Time Boarding-School Sports.*

Although my children and grandchildren have gone to the most up-to-date intellectual incubators, I have no reason to envy them when I recall my own experience while being hatched out in a more primitive and natural way in a school nest in the Tuscaroras.

Our instructors were not over bookish, but they knew a boy's nature,—the best part of any system of pedagogics. They were especially wise enough to encourage us in out-of-doors woodsy life, even at the expense of the class-room.

We trapped game, but we must make our own traps; and one of the instructors had lived among the Indians. We wove nets, and with them "swept" the creeks, and captured all sorts of aquatic monsters, some of which have apparently become extinct in civilized waters;—*e. g.*, ten-pound snapping turtles that lay on the bottom like round and slippery rocks and suggested our keeping our boots on; headless eels that looked like stuffed stockings with a row of eyes around the top. We knew the trout-holes within a radius of five miles

as well as a hawk knows the roosting places of young chickens.

One rule of the school was especially appreciated; —we could after our eleventh year keep a shotgun, provided it was not loaded on the premises. I never afterward anticipated an academic degree so eagerly as I awaited the honor of entering the society of our Young Nimrods. By incessant preliminary practice I could aim a broomstick exactly at a knot-hole, and my pocket-money had been hoarded for percussion caps. My supreme admiration was for one of our teachers who relieved the tedium of a private lesson in Latin grammar by explaining to us the mechanism of a gun-lock, and making up for the classical waste of the time by telling the tale of Hercules slaying the Hydra. Hercules and I subsequently performed joint exploits on moccasins, black and other snakes found in the woods.

Squirrels were our pets. Nearly every boy had one in his room. Two red squirrels used to sleep at night in my trousers' pockets. A gray squirrel, as big as a half-grown cat, was the prize exhibit in my domestic menagerie. But I never succeeded in taming him. One day he sprang from a shelf at the rear of the room straight through the front window some ten paces off, cutting himself to death with the glass. Van Amburg couldn't have mourned more over the death of one of his pet lions than I did over the body of my savage captive. The creature belonged to me in a special sense, for I had discovered his native lair in a hollow tree-trunk, fast-

ened a pillow-case over the top exit, kindled a fire at the lower entrance, and made him leap for his life into my trap. For his tragic end I therefore felt myself responsible. His ghost still frequently haunts me. What right had I to rob him of glorious years of life among the nut trees? And what a splendid spirit he showed! His leap through the window pane was doubtless the execution of a vow as deep as Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty, or give me death!" How often since have I lowered my rifle and spared the shot when a big plume-tailed gray has looked down upon me with accusing eyes, and chatteringly taunted me with the tragic fate of my old pet! Thus by his heroic death that squirrel, like martyrs among men, has saved many of his race. I will embalm his memory. I wish I had stuffed his skin.

I sympathize heartily with a gentleman, now one of the foremost naturalists in the world, who when a boy told me how an owl in the Canadian woods assumed the shape of another owl which the lad had shot in a Jersey swamp the year before, and made the forests resound with "L-o-o-o-o-k! Who-o-o-o-o's come? The wr-r-r-retch

" 'that shot me in the field of Shrewsbury.

Seize on him, ye owls, take him to your torments.' "

Doubtless Beebe now finds relief for his conscience in the fact that there are more living owls in the woods because of his boyhood compunctions.

I doubt if Colonel Roosevelt's thrills among the

beasts of the jungle were more exquisite than those of two of us boys encountering a big eagle. To be sure, the King of Birds must have been sick that day, or he would not have ignominiously perched upon the cross-sticks of a worm-fence within shot-gun range. I recall how my aim covered half the points of the compass before I could steady my nerve to draw bead on the prey. When he fell to the ground there was still enough life in his beak and talons to make it dangerous for us to touch him. It required cautious manœuvering to stretch out his wings so far that by holding them by the extreme tips we could make the eagle march down the road. He put up a tremendous death fight, jabbing at us with his curved cimeter-like beak, and making frantic but feeble leaps to bury his stiletto spurs into our flesh. But we held on, largely because we were afraid to let go. After a mile or more of this convoy—much like a submarine taking a gunboat into port—we deposited our victim, an exhausted heap of quivering feathers, on our playground, where we were commanded by the village minister to give him one shot more as a *coup de mort*.

To steal Indian-fashion through the woods without cracking a stick or rustling a dry leaf until at our very feet the partridge startled us with her “drumming” as she tried to decoy us away from her young brood;—to lift the box off our “figure-four trap,” uncertain if we should find a hare, a hedgehog, a ’possum or a wildcat beneath it, with the different sort of tactics that would be required

to retain the prey, or, in case it should prove a wood-pussy, to let her go without taking toll for her retention;—to fish until our stomach-clocks told us it was noon, clean our catch, build a bramble fire in an extemporized three-stone stove, gather an armful of roasting-ears from Farmer Oakson's ten-acre corn-field—which we appropriated with the same sense of legal right that Ruth had when gleaning in the field of Boaz;—who can think of such days without feeling the air again laden with the odors of pine and balsam and birch and charged almost to effervescence with ozone, making him take deep breaths, and rejuvenating his very senility?

I wonder if Billy, the new boy, fresh and green from the city, has ever forgiven us for urging him to grab the polecat, with the assurance that it was a muskrat whose scent was exceedingly sweet when dried out. If he is still vengeful I herewith promise to pay my share for the new coat and trousers made necessary by having to bury his old ones in the ground.

I also offer my part of due apologies to a new teacher who found a garter snake between the sheets one night when he went to bed.

But “let bygones be bygones”! Alas, we have to!

We had no gymnasium at the academy. Had there been one, no boy would have gone into it, any more than a bird would enter a wire cage for the purpose of exercising on its perches and swinging-rings. The great out-of-doors was our playground.

Legging and arming it up a tree-trunk is more interesting and makes better development of nerve and muscle than lifting oneself by ladder-rungs. Letting yourself down a precipice by a long wild-grape vine is more exhilarating than swinging on a trapeze. No tenpin ball is comparable with a half-ton boulder taking ten-rod leaps down the mountain-side. What concrete or porcelain-lined water-tank can compare with the swimming hole, where you can have a twenty-foot dive if you know how to make it? What is foot-and-wind practice on a level gravel path compared with a mountain climb? These exercises gave us more bounding blood and tougher sinews than if we had had an ex-pugilist or age-winded university champion for our trainer.

We had no skating pond. But a river made a horseshoe bend around our village—seven miles through the woods whose protection from the winds left the ice unfretted by a ripple, glistening black ice, where your own steel made the first mark, and the ringing of your metal was echoed by the forests, or occasionally answered by a black bear that, surprised by your unexpected apparition, growled at you, but knew that it was useless to give chase.

. . . “All shod with steel  
We hissed along the polished ice. . . With the din  
Smitten, the precipices rang loud;  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tingled like iron.”

Stealing behind trees and rocks to bring down a

hawk from the high branch of a dead tree; ferreting your way behind stone walls until you are in the midst of a flock of wild pigeons, and can get two of them at a shot; standing patiently on guard by the hour on the fox's runway until Reynard surrenders his brush as a tribute to your good aim; snapping the fly at the exact instant it is swallowed by the "boss of the brook";—these things train one to the habit of correlating mind and eye and nerve and muscle for simultaneous action far better than any device invented by pedagogists.

I do not claim for the old school the highest grade for academic training. Our teachers were undoubtedly more painstaking than learned in the classics and the sciences. We did not, however, miss their lack of erudition, for we should not have appreciated it if it had really been on daily tap for us; but we did appreciate their fidelity and encouragement as we dug into square-roots and Greek roots, and, above all, into the roots of our own consciences and purposes.

In spite of faults which would have been unpardonable in Andover Academy and many another school of that day, I believe that we boys from Way-Back forged our way as far to the front of affairs, and in as goodly proportion to our numbers, as those from any of our most noted preparatory institutions. I now recall that of about seventy lads, gathered largely from the neighboring country district, without any social or ancestral inheritance in the way of special culture, mostly farmers' boys,

two were afterward ministers in the largest churches of New York City, eight became of more than local professional reputation in smaller cities and towns, one a highly distinguished professor in a great university, and others well known in various walks of life.

I must tell a story of one of the most modest of my comrades. He lived in Southern Pennsylvania. On leaving college he served in the Christian Commission of Civil War days, and learned enough of movements preliminary to the advance of an army into a new section of country to suspect that certain strangers coming into his home neighborhood foreboded an invasion of Lee across the borders. By careful observation he confirmed his surmise. He tried to give an alarm to the authorities at Washington, but all wires were down. He mounted his horse and drove it to exhaustion over the hills; borrowed another, and at fifty or sixty miles away reached a telegraphic station. He sent a dispatch to Governor Curtin at Harrisburg. Being from an unknown person the message was not altogether credited, but was transmitted to Washington. Preparation for the victory at Gettysburg was the sequel.

When, some years after the war, the name of the sender of the dispatch was discovered, I hugged myself complacently in recognizing it as that of one of my old pals in tracking woodsy marauders who had become the hero in trailing the bigger game.

As now, through the haze of nearly fourscore years, I envisage one by one these old boys who were the fathers of their own manhood, I think pleasantly of Wordsworth's lines :

“It is a generous spirit, who, when brought  
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought  
Upon the plan that pleased his boyhood thought.”

I would send my grandchildren to the old academy in the hills if the old teachers still lived ; if the old boys were endowed with perpetual youth ; if, as lizards re-grow their lost tails, the old buildings could repair the ravages of time, or the worse havoc often made by our remorseless so-called “ progressive civilization ” ; and if—Alas, there's the rub!—if I could go back too.

#### *First Psychological Puzzle.*

A fire one night destroyed the school dormitory, and, but for the nimbleness of some two hundred legs, would have made a holocaust of children sufficient to have delighted Moloch in his most vindictive mood. I refer to it because it gave me my first problem in psychology, long before I ever heard of such a science.

We were aroused at midnight by flames flashing in at the windows, smoke pouring through the ventilators, and voices calling us to fly for our lives. I have a clear remembrance of tumbling down from the upper berth of our two-story bedstead, grasping

the handle of my trunk, and dragging it as far as the room door. From that moment all was blank until I found myself sitting on my trunk under a big tree some two hundred feet from the burning building. How I got there I cannot conceive. A bruise on the outside of my head and a racking ache inside chronicled nothing. Had I plunged head foremost down the great stairway in the avalanche of boys and baggage? Did I unconsciously and automatically go to that seat of observation where, like a little Nero, I sat gloating over the wild scene of the conflagration? I certainly had been knocked out of myself; but by what and into what? Did my subliminal consciousness come up and help me when my other wits were gone, as in Eastern stories the fairies come up through the worm-holes in the ground, and help the unfortunate? That interrogation mark has hooked itself into me all my life, and neither Sir William Hamilton nor William James have extracted the barbs.

Let me parallel that experience with another, although it occurred many years after; for chronological sequence shouldn't hamper an old man's reminiscence any more than logic restrains a popular preacher.

I was once addressing a crowd densely packed into a poorly ventilated audience hall. Suddenly I felt myself fainting. I distinctly recall my sensation as I floated away. Farther and farther I drifted through space. I could not have aeroplaned so far in a day. Then slowly—Oh, how slowly!—I

drifted back again. But when I resumed my senses I was surprised to find myself squarely on my feet, and facing the audience that showed no sign of having noticed my absence. I recalled the word I had last uttered, and continued the sentence and the speech. After the meeting, observing a medical acquaintance, I told him of my strange experience. "I did not notice any hiatus in your talk," said he; "but now that you speak of it, I think I can time it. It was probably just after you said (here he quoted the exact sentence). I recall that you seemed to hesitate for a word, took a step aside and rested your hand on the table."

Is the mind like a falcon on the wrist of its mistress, to fly away and return at her bidding? A return ball brought back by an elastic connection with the body? Possibly death is only the centrifugal force overcoming the centripetal, and thus permanently separating soul and body: the final divorce anticipated by temporary estrangements.

### *First Impression of a Special Providence.*

After the fire the tall walls of the school building still stood, though there was nothing left within them except piles of débris. In our school histories we boys had read of battering rams, and decided to exploit one. Some twenty of us manned an immense piece of timber, and, like the Greeks at Troy, rushed it head-on against the wall. The pile tottered. Again and again we drove at it, imagining that it would tumble perpendicularly in a heap in

front of us. On the contrary, its cemented strength made it fall almost horizontally in one piece. It came at us like a hawk pouncing down upon a brood of chickens with extended wings covering them on all sides at once to prevent escape. Several of the boys were for a moment missing in the cloud of lime-dust that the smash sent up. However, upon taking account of stock, we found that our number and the number of bones belonging to each had been miraculously preserved. But the shiver of that moment! It fairly crumples the paper on which I am now, after more than half a century, writing.

The village preacher the next Sunday discoursed from the text, "In the midst of life we are in death;" about the most impressive sermon I ever heard, having helped provide him with a timely illustration.

How often since the impression then made has come back at me with a sort of battering-ram stroke! Once with another lad I was running across a jam of logs that seemed to solidly bridge a broad river. We came to a hole where four great logs had so lodged against one another that they made a square frame about some open water. No swimming-pool was ever more enticing. Of course, I stripped off coat and trousers and plunged in. When tired of treading water, I essayed to climb out. But the logs so rolled that I could not mount them. It was only when I was completely exhausted that my companion managed to find a long

slab which he laid across one corner of the pool, and pulled me out.

Once, on arriving in port, the crane, which was being swung in from the dock over a hatchway, caught the heavy iron chain attached to a smoke-stack. It fell, splitting a deck plank. On its way it tore my coat. "Thank the Lord for a narrow escape!" said an officer. I did instantler.

I have since crossed the ocean fourteen times without having been menaced by an accident. Query:—Which were the greater "Providential deliverances," when I was frightened by the "narrow escapes," or when I was so carefully guarded by an Unseen Hand that I had not even a suspicion that I had been in danger at all?

### *A Boy's Influence.*

"What person has most influenced your life?" was passed around in a company of men representing various professions. All the magnates of history appeared in the various answers. I called to recollection my instructors in the university, the great preachers and lecturers that had charmed my attention or swayed my purposes, and the most notable books I had pondered. When it came my turn to respond to the question, I replied "Reddy Copeland."

"Reddy Copeland?" queried the high-brows. "And who was he?"

"One of my boy comrades before I was in my teens," I replied.

Reddy was not particularly brilliant, except for his red hair which gave him his sobriquet. I cannot think of any single thing he ever said or did that was of any great importance. But he was one of those fellows who have a way of getting close to you; and, being a little older, a little stronger, a little wiser, a little more venturesome, of a little quicker initiative and a little more persistence, lead you on at least one step further than you had at first thought of going.

If this Cicerone should happen to be a vicious boy, woe unto you! If he is a good boy, thank God for having brought you two together. I do. I wonder if Reddy is living. He has made no flaring mark on his generation, or I should have known it. Would he recognize himself in my description? Probably not; for I presume that he was utterly unconscious of his leadership.

The secret of Reddy's influence was in the fact that in age, studies, sports and disposition he was so near to me that I never lost his trail. There were boys of more talent and more virtue, and certain of our instructors were men of saintly character and much erudition, for some of them afterward became college professors; but they were too far away from me. I admired and revered them, but I did not feel them. I would con over the wise things they had said, resolve and perhaps pray over their suggestions; but when Reddy said "Come on! Let's do this!" he pulled me after himself. When he wouldn't do a thing, he blocked my way also.

I volunteer this hint to young people;—Your greatest tempter or your best helper, especially in matters pertaining to character, is apt to be some one very much like yourself. Personal influences seem to have the same law as gravitation,—the attraction diminishes with the distance. In respect to morals the title of a lecture by a noted university president is significant,—“Education by Contagion.” It is the “Power of the Touch.”

*Companionships Unfelt.*

While some companions, like Reddy, indent themselves upon one’s memory, others fail to make more than a shadow-impression upon us, although we may have been associated with them in the most interesting scenes, and may have been partners in events that stirred our souls equally. An incident will illustrate this.

I was recently riding in a train through the district of country where the old academy was located. My seatmate was an elderly man whose face attracted me strongly, yet I could not tell why, for there was no familiar line in it, nor was he especially prepossessing. I am now confident that my attention was drawn to him by the telepathic influence that plays between two persons who are at the time in the same current of thought or emotion. The man suddenly turned to me, and without any preliminary remark, as if we had been conversing familiarly before, said:

“When I was a boy I went to a school somewhere

over the hills yonder," mentioning the name of my first Alma Mater.

"So did I," I exclaimed, enthusiastically. "In what year?"

"1852."

"Why, then we must have been schoolmates."

The gentleman gave me his name. I had no recollection of ever having heard it before. Mine was as strange to him. But with the general life of the school, the doings of some of the boys and the eccentricities of some of the masters, he was quite familiar. Among his reminiscences he began the following:

"Three of us fellows one day played hookey. We spent the day down at Pomeroy's creek. We were wading in water and mud about to our waists when one shrieked out 'Bloody murder!' and declared that he had stepped on a big round stone that wriggled from under his feet and tried to bite him."

"Hold on!" said I. "I was that boy. The stone was a mud-turtle as big as a kneeding pan. We dug him out ——"

"Yes," interrupted my companion, "and tied him to a tree stump, tearing up a net for a rope. Then we turned him on his back with the help of a swimming plank."

"And then," I put in, "we tied his floppers, and carried him home hanging from a fence rail on our shoulders."

"Only we didn't dare to go home with him," corrected my seatmate. "We were afraid of old G——,

the principal. So we went over to Mammy Young's cottage. She killed a hen for us, and ——"

"Only she didn't kill the hen," I prompted. "We had to kill the hen ourselves, pick her feathers off and clean out her innards. That was always the condition of Mammy Young's giving us a fricassee with buckwheat cakes for a quarter."

"A quarter?" said my friend. "You mean two bits, for that was still the numismatic nomenclature in that part of the Union. And you have forgotten the apple-sauce that went with the chicken. And how old Mammy Young loved us boys, and would never blab on us, when, after the most disgraceful escapades we turned up at her house with an appetite and the two bits."

Thus we two old boys swapped and paralleled memories for an hour; but, strangely as it seemed to us both, neither of us recollected the other's personality at the time when we were partners in one of the most exciting scenes of our boyhood. The mud-turtle and the hen had made more impression on us both than had each other's souls.

Is there some subtle, unintelligible affinity between certain persons that makes them feel one another without the help of circumstances; while between others there is a natural irrelation, only a "dead wire" connection that fails to convey a spark of real spiritual sympathy big enough to make recognition? How little outward communication has to do with inward communion! Are we men like chemicals, some of which will never unite

with other chemicals though we try to hammer or fuse them together; while other substances combine at the slightest touch, or even because of proximity?

Do not regard me, then, as especially selfish, indifferent or case-hardened, when I confess that the vast majority of those whom I have met in after life, even in seemingly intimate association, in boards, commissions, professional work, neighborhood and social life, have consciously influenced me less than some with whom I have only touched elbows in the passing crowd.

*Kindergarten Archaeology.*

I recall no class in History at the old school. Perhaps it was because I was regarded as too young to chronologize the ages. Yet while there I acquired a passion for historical study which has obsessed me all my life. I retain from those days a taste for grubbing the deep-down archaeological roots of the human story.

A mile or two away was a famous "Indian mound." It stood some twenty feet high, and covered about a quarter of an acre. It had been for generations an aboriginal cemetery. Thousands had shed their red skins and given their white skeletons for this monument of a now extinct tribe. It was especially famed as the burial place of warriors. One could count the battles of the tribe by the thicker layers of bones, as one counts the succeeding civilization of the entire human race by the ruins of Forum and Temple piled one upon another.

We boys delved through this mortal débris. Near the top were bits of skull still holding the bullets that had broken them. Lower down we found arrow-heads in profusion, indicating a date before firearms were generally used by the savages. Now and then a tomahawk would lie near to a heap of finger bones, in token of the brave hand that had wielded it. I have sat long on The Mound, and tried to visualize in imagination the passing of the tribes on their way to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Their lives were narrow, inconsequential, but to each one of them as important, as absorbing, as exciting as that of Kaiser or Czar. I tried to realize to myself the meaning of those masses of humanity, as I did the meaning of the grains of sand on the desert, the leaves of the forest that strewed the ground, the birds that darkened the sky when the flocks passed over me on their way southward.

I remember, long years afterward, having the same emotion, the same attempted calculation, the same sense of the mystery of it all, as I sat on the parapet of San Angelo in Rome, and tried to count the epochs of history that had flowed as ceaselessly as the Tiber at my feet. I think, however, I was more jostled by the Time-Spirit at the Indian Mound than at Hadrian's Tomb. At least the former, perhaps because it came first, made the deeper impression of the multitudinous vastness of humanity and the littleness of any individual or any era.

## IV

### RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS

#### *First View of Death.*

**M**Y profession has thrown me much among tragedies. I have no desire to depict the worst of them here. Those which men write about in books or act on the stage are only surface shadows above the depths of common experience.

My deepest experience of the tragic was exceedingly commonplace. It was not when the warring nations of Europe transformed their happy lands into charnels. It was not when I walked amid the ruins of Messina above the sepulchers of eighty thousand who had no other burial tomb than the débris. It was not when awakened by the sound of the great cathedral bell that, during the Civil War, announced a victory by pealing forth the *Star Spangled Banner*, and a defeat by discordant clash, as if the thousands on the battle-field were together shrieking their last agony.

One afternoon a comrade at the academy dared me to follow him in a dive from the spring-board into the great swimming hole.

With merry laugh he turned somersault into the water.

How that laugh still rings in my ears! I waited

on the spring-board for my comrade to reappear before imitating his exploit. A half-minute of delight; a half-minute more of curiosity; another half-minute of consternation. The tiny waves made by his plunge subsided; the surface of the pool quietly reflected the overhanging branches. But my companion came not. We waited, I know not how long, before we called for help, for thought was paralyzed. A vast Vacuity, a horrible Nothingness, had absorbed a human life as the atmosphere absorbs a broken bubble. We boys were bubbles, so were all the people in the villages, in all the world; and that Nothingness was waiting to swallow us too!

An hour later we stood around a white body on the bank. How long we looked at it, and tried to realize that it was he! For hours and months and years I have continued to see him—the body so white, the face so beautiful turned into marble!

That hour on the bank my thoughts first began to tangle themselves in the inextricable mystery of death, of which I am still awaiting the solution. I then knew that what I had thought to be a solid ground beneath me was but a thin surface, like the film of ice which the first cold day would put over that swimming hole; and ever since I have walked timorously except as a wiser faith has given me courage. The pride of childhood—and no one is so proud and self-sufficient as a child may be—all shrivelled and shrank into a sense of humiliation, as for the first time—yet for all time—I realized that I was a denizen of the Unknown, and that nothing

was so unknown as I myself. This was my first conscious step on

“The great world’s altar stairs,  
That slope through darkness up to God.”

The shock of that first look upon death might have been very hurtful to me, but for a second look which revealed to me that the face of the Great Inevitable was not that of a monster. For some weeks I had gone about bewildered, frightened. As the temperature of the desert dries up the fountains, so the dread Unknown about me seemed to desiccate my life of all possibility of enjoyment. That white marble countenance of my comrade looked in upon me everywhere. It was at my bed at night; it stared out of the heap as we scrambled for the football; and the rigid and stark form would start up at my side as I walked.

There was another boy in the school to whom I was greatly attached. Tommy —— was a loving fellow. Like myself, he was far away from home, motherless, somewhat lonely; so we exchanged confidences.

Tommy was suddenly stricken with fatal illness. With what muffled feet we walked up and down the long hallway past his room, and then went to our own rooms crying when the doctor came out of the sick-chamber shaking his head! A few of Tommy’s most intimate friends were permitted to enter his room just before the end came. On the bedside sat the village minister, a rough sort of sky-pilot, of

whose big heart and common sense I will have more to tell later. Tommy's eyes were fixed intently upon the minister's face, his own aglow with happy emotion, as when one listens to a charming story. The minister was translating the classic Biblical description of Paradise into the language of familiar woods and streams where we boys had played together. He told of the wonderful change that had come upon the mother and sister whom Tommy had lost, now that they were in the light that is fairer than ever falls from the earthly sky. He spoke of Christ as if He were the big brother who waits to welcome us when we enter the higher grade school called Heaven. The man's words and manner were utterly devoid of pietistic solemnity, and as simple and cheerful as if the two were speaking of a coming vacation. When the sick boy caught a glimpse of his playmates at the foot of the bed, he made an effort to raise his thin hand, and gave us his speechless salutation and farewell. His gaze trembled an instant, then seemed to be diverted by a vision of something radiant. So his soul passed.

And this, too, was Death.

The rigid, expressionless features of my drowned comrade were surely only a material mask that Death puts on. The face of Tommy, loving, ecstatic, reflected some sort of gleam from the very Soul of Souls, which we call the Unknown. I needed then that happier impression; and it has stayed with me ever since.

*Subtle Influence of Places and Men.*

Among the ancients was a persistent belief that certain places are peculiarly sacred to the gods, who there commune with men. Sometimes doubtless this mystic credulity was born from a sense of awe awakened by natural features of the spot; as, for example, Mount Olympus, amid whose sublimities Heaven seemed to mingle with earth; the awful chasm of Delphi, the echoes of which were prophetic; the Oak of Dodona whose rattling leaves suggested the babbling of eternities; the Cave of Pan, out of whose rocky sides a river leaped full-headed and resistless, the symbol of the fates of men.

Among the early Jews and Arabs it was assumed that divine manifestations might be rewitnessed at places where the deity had before appeared or spoken. Thus the Patriarchs in their wanderings established depots of spiritual blessing to which they afterward resorted, as Arctic explorers build cairns along their projected routes, and stock them with provisions. Abraham revisited Bethel, where he had had a previous blessing. So did Jacob, seeking to renew the sense of the divine covenant which it was believed Jehovah had aforetime made with his fathers.

Similarly the site of the old academy is hallowed ground in the minds of some of us, now gray-headed, who sojourned there during the middle part of the last century. Although it was not a denominational school, nor under any strictly religious con-

trol, yet year after year the majority of the scholars were led to consecrate themselves to high spiritual ideals.

That the influence of the spot was not limited to the creation of passing emotion, as is so often the case in what are known as Revivals, is evidenced by the fact that among my comrades, say seventy boys, there were, as I have stated, more than a dozen who afterward attained somewhat of distinction as preachers and leaders in moral and philanthropic movements. As in after life I have met these men I have been impressed with the practical turn of their minds; though of evident piety they had an abundance of what has been called "sanctification."

Were we boys under a special spell of the genii of the place? I remember, to borrow the classic figure, that I had my own Dodona Oak whose branches roofed a hundred feet of the stony hillside, and whose gigantic roots made my first library chair, sitting on which and listening to the acorns fall I received more inspiration than from any seat of learning I have since occupied. There were also Pisgah heights in the neighboring hills where I used to go and sit by the hour, watching the smoke curling from distant farmhouses, and straining my soul eyes to see across a little river that I likened to the Jordan that separates the present from the future world. There were also vast silences in the depth of the primeval forests, very helpful to one who should try to hear that "still, small voice"

which is willing to speak to any one who will silence the babble of his own thoughts.

Yet there are other places in the world with physical adjuncts far more favorable to the mystic mood than the neighborhood of the academy; but not even the Gerner Grat has for me so high a spiritual note, nor does the Cañon of the Yellowstone sound me so deeply. I have stood on the Temple platform in Jerusalem, I have gazed from the dome of Saint Peter's in Rome, and invoked the gods from the ruins of the Parthenon in Athens. But a crotch of an old tree on the edge of a cliff that overlooks an unmapped valley was to me a higher point of inspiration.

Is there truth in the medieval theory that a spiritual aura lingers over some spots, a subtle influence from the souls of those who have lodged there, which all the winds of the lower sky can never blow away? Did the fact that revivals of religion had in past years swept over our happy school valley perpetuate the tendency to their repetition? Did the knowledge that this spot had previously been sacred to so many consecrations awaken in us boys an expectancy which thus became a "prophecy that fulfills itself"?

I can think of but one tangible clue to this maze of speculation. There was, and had been for many years, in the little community a person about whom the religious interest seemed to centre, or rather from whom it appeared to emanate. He was the local pastor, to whom I have referred;—a man of no

special learning; of exceedingly crude, though rather lurid, rhetoric; but of a wonderfully deep sympathetic nature, and a common-sense shrewdness in talking to boys. He played football with us. (I here reverently, penitently, apologize to his ghost, if it hover hereabouts, for having once barked his shins and thus prevented his getting the ball away from me.) He taught us the tricks of the wild game in the woods, and also the tricks of the devil in preying upon us "young kids." He could find water with the hazel branch, and he knew by some subtler means the hidden springs of motive in a boy's soul.

If sanctification is only double-distilled refinement and morals is only *mores* or manners become second nature, as some affirm, our pastor was certainly no saint. I have seen him pause in the midst of a sermon, draw from his pocket a plug of nigger-head tobacco, bite off a piece and proceed to his "finally brethren." He was unread, except in the Bible, and that he had studied just as he studied garden manures, to get quicker results, and to put stiffer stalks into the souls of his parishioners.

Of the strange, but powerful, influence of this almost backwoods pastor, I may give a telling illustration which I borrow from some ten years later. In my early manhood my path was crossed by that of a very brilliant young German. He had graduated from a famous university, had travelled much and read enormously, written learnedly on philosophical and other topics. He was a thorough Ger-

man, and evidently believed himself to be a fair specimen of what a Superman should be, although that word had not yet ambitiously climbed into use. He claimed to have outgrown Christianity, except as an archaeologist never outgrows antiquity. Religion was to him only a study in the history of psychological science. I think I had never met a man who was more "able to give a reason for the *un-faith* that was in him."

As my German friend needed a rest somewhere among the high hills, I recommended my old school neighborhood. I had some misgivings in introducing him to Pastor ———; for a greater contrast between two intellects could scarcely be conceived. My friend's first letters to me after his arrival were full of polite contempt for this "Yankeefied John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness." A little later he expressed a liking for the rough diamond in the man; after a while a real fondness for the big soul and genial comradeship, "better than any doctor's medicine, for there is a healthful ozone about the dominie." Before the season was over my proud scholar and philosopher wrote me a letter that would not have been more pathetic if tear-stained, in which he confessed himself an humble, soul-satisfied Christian. His comments upon the pastor were substantially these:

"Philosophers think; this man has felt."

"Scholars talk about the humanities; this man talked about myself and himself, and he seemed to be expert in both fields."

“There was something solid in his experience; mine was only vacuum or suds.”

“He was no theological visionary; but he seemed to have seen that greatest of all visions, the face of Jesus Christ.”

Who directed this self-sufficient German sceptic and made him turn at the proper cross-road? Well! A “tender-foot” who has lost the trail will learn more from an Indian than he will from a commission of map-makers.

### *A Boy's Feeling.*

If you ask me about my own personal religious experience at the school, I will reply in the words of a real saint,—“Oh, I have never had any experience *to speak of.*” While I was exceedingly sensitive to all the moods of nature around me, my soul was as echoless as a vacuum to dogmatic appeals.

I once thought I must have been born a spiritual deficient. This notion was confirmed in me by the judgment of a strolling phrenologist who belonged to the race of gypsy scientists that has about passed away, and who gave me twenty-five cents' worth of examination. He pronounced my skull to be lacking in such protuberances as would indicate reverence and credulity. I abounded only in spiritual lowlands. This wise man's opinion might have permanently injured me, were it not that shortly afterward I submitted my bumps to the fingering of a fifty-cent philosopher, who expressed his amaze-

ment at the size of the spiritual hills he found in my cranial landscape. But I am inclined to think that the former of these experts was nearer right, and perhaps more honest with me. For my soul simply wouldn't melt into the molds of experience which were set for us by the approved revival methods of that day.

For instance, much used to be made of what was called the Law-work in a soul; a deep sense of sin; a recognition of the justice of God should He be inclined to damn us for our transgressions. I knew that I was as full of faults as a sieve is of holes, and I could keep my complacency, when the minister looked down at me from the pulpit, as little as the sieve can hold water. But I couldn't feel myself to be a "damnable" even of the pigmy sort. So I accepted the divine grace with no great sense of relief, for I realized no great need. It seemed to be even more natural that God should forgive me for my worst offenses than that He should damn me. I was sure that my father would have done so, if I had asked him. And I was sure that Mr. ———, one of our junior instructors, who let me sit on his knee when he corrected my Latin exercises, would have done so too. Indeed, that teacher really did know of some of my graver faults, and never even reported me to the principal. He gave me, I fear, a clearer idea of Grace than I got out of the Catechism.

For a year I was a rebel. Possibly I would have grown up outside any church had it not been for a

venerable clergyman who told me that, as a child, I could no more assay my own experiences than I could analyze the philosophy of the Westminster Creed. He advised me to attempt neither.

Then I joined the church. Was it wise? Did I know enough? Had I felt enough? Was I good enough? No. But I think I was honest. I believed in God's goodness. Did I not see it everywhere? So I said to myself, "God will never go back on you. Trust Him, and go ahead. You will get awfully muddled if you don't."

That, by the way, is about the most clarifying judgment I have ever achieved in all my moralizings and all my religious lucubrations.

*Sixty Years After (Parenthetical).*

While writing the above my memory so obsessed me that sixty-odd years vanished, and I was a child again. When I aroused myself I wondered if the old school were still in existence. Possibly the tooth of time may have gnawed away all the houses of the tiny village; or the demon called Progress may have wrecked them into a modern town with ugly brick buildings, tall smoking chimneys, and corner saloons. I would go and see.

A train ride of several hundreds of miles, with a buckboard supplement of ten miles further, brought me to the spot. I might have passed by the village but for the remark of the driver, "We hev'n't to go no further."

I disputed with him for the moment, charging

him with having brought me to the wrong place. But he was right. One half-ruined building was the sole monument of the educational cluster of edifices that in a hundred of my dreams have loomed bigger than those of any university. The old church still stood on the hilltop; but it seemed to my disappointment like a ghostly sentinel watching over a battle-field from which the war had long since drifted away.

But the hills were unchanged, only they looked lower. In their undulations they seemed to be bowing to welcome one whose boyhood feet had tramped them long ago. The little river called out to me with the same merry laughter of its ripples; but, like some old men, it seemed dwarfed, while the swimming hole had been choked by the *débris* of half a century. A fish broke water in the pool, as if it said, "Hello, old chap, we've been lonesome without you." A few ancient trees I recognized by their sites and shapes, but they had many decrepit branches that made my own limbs ache in sympathy, for all that the trees seemed to wave at me and say, "So long, old boy!" A big gray squirrel, doubtless in the sixtieth generation from the one in whose tragic taking off I had had such guilty part, scolded me saucily as if his family kept up the vendetta against the murderer of his ancestor.

A small country school is held in the part of the building still standing, and reminded me of a sucker growing from the stump of an old tree; for the

legends of the spot had kept it "educational." The teacher and pupils listened to my story of the past very much, I suppose, as I have listened to Lanciani amid the ruins of Rome. My talk doubtless seemed as primitive and fabulous, as I tried to locate the lines of ancient walls of what had been to me both Temple and Forum.

I have spoken of the tendency of the mind to mix imagination with memory, and to recollect things that were not just so. An incident occurred during this visit which made me fear that I might have been stricken with that disease of unconscious mendacity. I had told to one of the people I met how a lot of us boys had one day pried a great boulder out of its socket and started it rolling down the long and steep hill which ended in a stone schoolhouse at the bottom of the valley. I described how it leaped into the air, taking a rod at a jump, crashing through the small saplings, striking at last the end of the schoolhouse, and making the stone chips fly as if under the impact of a battering-ram. My listener incredulously remarked that the schoolhouse was a wooden, not a stone, structure. We searched it out. He was right. It was an ancient frame building. The door-sill had been worn down by many generations of boys and girls, and the rot of years was in its rafters. Alas for me!

But my relief came. An older inhabitant shambled into our group. He said, "The stranger is right. This house is only about fifty-five year

old. The original school was of stun; but it was too small; beside, it was pretty well battered and dilapidated when they tore it down."

So I am emboldened to spin some more recollections with the confidence that they will not be made of mere yarn.

(I will enclose in this parenthesis another one. The ancient parsonage is still standing,—or rather leaning. It needs a shower of paint, for the resources of the parish would hardly warrant the purchase of paint by the can. Its roof shows the friction of the three-quarters of a century that have passed over it.

But the occupants of the parsonage belong to the class that never grow old. The minister, who is well along in years, serves a parish ten miles wide and twenty miles long. In this district are three preaching stations, between which his horse knows the way as well as the angels knew the road between Bethlehem and Nazareth.

The clergyman is a college-bred man, and retains all the refinement of his class-room and society. His wife is as cultivated as any of the ladies who grace our city Woman's Clubs. Books may be fewer than they could wish, but on that account more appreciated: those that are there would not be disparaged by Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Shelf of brain matter.

I doubt if this family has ever received over a thousand dollars in annual salary; yet they have educated at our best colleges and seminaries six

children. Two of the sons are useful clergymen, who were not frightened back from their convictions by their father's hard lot. Another son is a physician. One daughter has gone to the foreign mission field. Another daughter is at the head of a flourishing school in the city. The youngest remains as the stay of the home while father and mother are passing toward the sunset.

I have seen much of life high and low, with abundance and with leanness, honored and unsung; but I know of few families more cheerful, who are contributing more to make the great world around them happier and better, than this one. When the real history of our nation is written its best-flooded streams of influence will be seen to have flowed from such fountains as these. As I sat at the table in the humble parsonage I almost felt envious, if not of their lot, certainly of their reward.

## V

### ADRIFT

#### *Spineless Education.*

**A**FTER two years at the old academy, where we lived "close to nature's heart" and close to one another, I was unfortunately transferred to another institution. In about the Fifties there sprang up over the country, with the profusion of dandelions on a spring lawn, "Collegiate Institutes," co-ed establishments, get-wise-quickly agencies, where once a year, with far-flung advertisements and brass-band accompaniment, beardless boys and short-frocked girls sported diplomas with the gusto of university graduates.

These institutions were generally owned by private corporations of stockholders formed by enterprising business men for the purpose of booming their towns. Sometimes they were held under heavy mortgages by the principal, who had somehow given the impression that he was an "Educator," but whose chief qualification it may be was his ability to run the boarding and advertising departments.

The teachers were apt to include several "sisters and cousins and aunts" of the principal or chief

owner. This faculty was supplemented by a bevy of recent college graduates who were willing for a year or two to support the title of "Professor" of Latin, Greek, History, Botany or what not, until they should see their way to some more lucrative or attractive occupation.

Providence seemed to have forgotten me for a while, else why was I allowed to essay even a brief journey on one of those "royal roads to learning"?

On looking back upon my sojourn in one of these institutions, I cannot recall the slightest influence of any one of my instructors upon the healthy formation of my character. Indeed I never knew one of them in a friendly heart-to-heart or even head-to-head way, and I doubt if any of them was ever conscious that there was a timid, lonely lad who needed his kindly oversight. I bought textbooks; attended recitations; went through a form of stated examinations, at which I passed, as did everybody else;—but I was not taught to study anything: the art of mental application having been left entirely out of the curriculum. I absorbed no principles of a language; no beauty of a classic; no hint that "history is philosophy teaching by example," or indeed anything more than a dreary swamp across which I could jump on bog clumps called "chief events"; no suggestion of any inspiring book of literature; no friendly guidance of a mind wiser than my own. My recollection is a blank broken by several nightmares. I was like a young savage roaming for a while through the

streets of civilization, and from sheer loneliness longing for the tepee.

The result was, of course, intellectual disaster. I came to hate the sight of books; and but for the lack of enterprise and initiative engendered by my life at the school I would have donned a pair of thigh-boots, and gone after an older brother who was throwing himself away in the gold-diggings of California.

Yet there was one respect in which I really profited at this intellectual cabbage garden.

If my mind expanded at all it was in a yeasty sense of its emptiness,—not altogether a bad acquisition for a bumptious American lad. I hungered for mental pabulum, and my appetite was not spoiled by the tidbits of “culture” which were furnished by more fashionable schools, nor was I made dyspeptic by chunks of indigestible information. Not even such things were thrown at me. I left the school a healthy starveling.

This was true of me physically as well as mentally, for the refectory food showed no more signs of having been prepared in a diet kitchen than the class-room dispensary showed skill in pedagogics. “Boston brown (black) bread,” soggily cemented, was the daily *pièce de résistance*, and bread-pudding, in which we recognized the putty-fied hearts of our breakfast biscuits, served us generally for dessert.

My most pleasurable recollection of our menu was a banquet in my hall. One midnight we were

summoned from our sleep by the great Chinese gong being thrown down the main flight of stairs. Slices of brown bread, of which every boy had surreptitiously foraged a daily quantity for a month past, and which had become as hard as boiler plates, bombarded the door of the "professor" in charge of our floor. To this day the archives of the institution have revealed nothing as to the identity of the perpetrators of the insurrection. Of myself, I can only say—and that I do with my hand on my heart—that I have no conscience money to return to the treasury of the school.

I am led to narrate such incidents by recalling Goethe's preface to his renowned autobiography, in which he says—"The main object of biography is to exhibit the man in relation to the main features of his times, and to show how far he himself may have reflected them." I may thus be describing myself in describing events through which I passed, for these passing incidents may—as some one facetiously puts it—be marked by "in-side-dents" of more abiding character. I am sure that they affected my after disposition, else why should I so vividly recall them.

*By-products of Education.*

It is possible that in this ill-tempered criticism of the school I may do it an injustice. If the instructors did not help one, they at least left one alone to vegetate in such fertile spots as one might light upon. Amid the struggles of after years I

have often taken counsel of the thoughts and purposes that swayed me in those days of untutored vagabondage. I can appreciate, although I cannot appropriate to myself, something that the great Sir Humphrey Davy said of his boyhood,—“After all, I consider it fortunate that I was left much to myself when a child, and put upon no particular plan of study, and that I enjoyed much idleness at school. I perhaps owe to these circumstances the little talents that I have and their peculiar application.” Sir Humphrey’s brain was so healthy that it could “feed on its own fat,” but most boys survive intellectually only by nourishment wisely administered.

If the influence of the instruction of the school described was *nil*, I learned some things from my comrades that have stayed by me. A boy challenged me to lie between the upper and lower timbers of the railroad bridge while the train passed over us within two feet of our backs. The heavy freight seemed an eternity long, for it stopped midway the bridge, ignoring the fact that two silly urchins were having their souls crushed into a jelly of fright beneath its creaking wheels. The weight of that train has ever since been heavy upon me.

By another incident I learned to have a sane hesitancy before doubtful ventures. A playmate challenged me to swim with him across the river. I managed to reach the farther bank when a gurgling call just behind me showed that my companion was sinking from exhaustion. I managed to grasp

the low limb of a tree that hung over the water, and to extend to him my feet. He took that bait as tenaciously as a crab would have done, and so he was safely landed. I have been waked at night many a time with the question, "Will his fingers hold on?" And have turned over to sleep with his coughing reply, "All right, Jim."

About the same time I felt my first stir of real ambition. It was during the Fremont campaign for the Presidency. In the neighborhood of the school Henry Ward Beecher addressed a three-acre lot full of people. While describing very clearly the political lines of the battle between Fremont and Buchanan he suddenly paused, and, looking toward the extreme end of the field, cried out,—"Who is that crawling under the fence? Why, I declare it is Millard Fillmore!" So realistic was his description of the entrance of the third party into the campaign that those on the platform, including the chairman of the meeting, rose from their seats, some jumping upon their chairs, and craned their necks in the direction pointed by Mr. Beecher's finger, for the instant expecting to see the redoubtable figure of His Excellency, the then President seeking reëlection, crouching on all fours beneath the fence rail.

This gave me my first impression of the tremendous power of oratory. I began to say to myself, "What is the use of drifting like a slab downstream when one may control the current of his own and other people's lives?" On returning to the

school I sat half the night with my feet on the window-sill, looking at the stars, and thinking confusedly of something like what many years afterward I read in Schiller's "Wallenstein":

"In your own bosom are your Destiny's stars.  
Confidence in yourself, promptness, resolution,  
These are your favoring stars."

It must have been that one of the stars I happened to be watching winked at me, and sent me a sort of sarcastic ray; for my conceit was suddenly "knocked into pie" by the thought that only such men as Mr. Beecher have any stars inside them which they may consult. Or, if others have them, they are as confused and indistinct as the Milky Way, and are of no value for introspective astrol-ogers. I remember stopping suddenly in my vain cogitations, calling myself a fool, and climbing sheepishly into the top story of my double-decked bed. My roommate, who occupied the lower floor of said dormitory, confirmed my suspicion that I had been somewhat lunny by promptly calling me a sleep-walking jackass as I climbed up over him.

The Goethean method I have adopted in this narrative will allow another story for the sake of its moral. Among our instructors was one of Falstaffian dimensions. He was a religious devotee, and spent more time in prayer-meetings than in mastering the science he was expected to teach. Though prosy enough in the class-room, he put his whole three hundred pounds avoirdupois into his Hallelu-

jahs. There was one hymn especially adapted to his voice and shape. The chorus, if I remember correctly, began:

“The Judgment Day is rolling round.”

The “Professor” would pivot his huge hulk on a chair, and sway his body, like a roly-poly, in time with the music. I never understood how he executed the stunt until, years after, I saw the newly invented gyroscope device. One night, when either his enthusiasm or the incessant circular motion swirled his brain, the mighty mass lost its balance, and rolled on the floor. Though the rest of the assemblage were convulsed with laughter the rapt saint did not for an instant lose his equanimity, but repivoted himself on the chair, took up the refrain, and continued his revolutions as undisturbed as the revolving earth.

From that night on I have had a disposition to discount at the bank of common sense enthusiasts of all sorts. Perhaps we are all cranks; but unfortunately some of us have crooked handles which make our gyrations a little more noticeable.

About this time I became infatuated with the drama, and through a peculiar circumstance. I had never yet been inside a theatre, nor had I read a play. In the village was a Methodist minister of the old-fashioned type who devoted his Sunday evening sermon to the edification of such boys as could keep awake during the service. One night he held the fork over hell, and grilled the whole dra-

matic fraternity from Livius Andronicus down to Edwin Forrest, who was then starring the country. The preacher's peroration was memorable: "Young men, beware! Beware especially of Shakespeare! His is the most alluring, diabolically alluring, literature ever penned."

I knew nothing of Shakespeare, but being just at the time of life when one is looking for alluring things of all sorts, I surreptitiously made the acquaintance of the wicked William. My roommate and I, with the bed-blanket over the window and a pillow hung before the ventilator, dialogued play after play. Were it not that neither of us kids had sufficient brain development to understand and catch the rush of what we read, we might have run away and joined a troupe of strolling showmen. I have ever since held that the preacher's art is one of peculiar difficulties; that sermons are often boomerangs, and go in directions quite different from the speaker's original aim.

### *Sinister Influences.*

Among our instructors was a young man, a college graduate, who was appointed to teach Greek. He was a brilliant fellow, handsome as the devil, who is said to be a gentleman at least. As there were only two or three of us who were beginners in the tongue of Homer and Demosthenes, our instructor used to make us come to his private room for recitation. Here he need not interrupt his own quiet smoke, but with his feet on the table in true

university style could manage to get through the lesson in as short a time as suited his convenience. But as it would not do to dismiss the class until the bell rang, our instructor filled out the time with conversation which made up for its lack of Attie Salt by its salaciousness in other respects. There was something fascinating about the fellow; but on leaving his room I felt as I once did when watching a cobra expand his venomous head into a beautiful hood.

Did I misjudge this man? Not at all. Boys can scent an unsavory soul as readily as dogs know beggars and sneak-thieves from gentlemen. In after years I followed the career of this individual with much interest. He became a lawyer; a popular politician; was elected to the bench of his State by popular vote. At length he was denounced by the Bar Association, and removed from office for various offenses against common justice.

If as a lad I had little merit, I had at least a pride that was extremely sensitive to anything like depreciation. I was perhaps the smallest in size among my classmates. This suggested that at the annual exhibition, advertised as "The Commencement," I should be the first declaimer,—the thin point of the oratorical wedge which should "split the ears of the groundlings." I was irritated by the proposal to show me up for my lack of bulk and years. The teacher having charge of the ceremonies was very gracious, and promised to have my precocity exhibited further down the program. A few

days later I saw a printer's proof of the program. My name was down as that of first speaker. Never was a hornet more filled with rage than I was. I buzzed straight into the teacher's room with my protest.

The man smiled complacently, and replied :

"Why, my lad, you are not the first on the program. You have been misinformed."

I whipped out the galley proof, and threw it down on the table before him. He colored slightly, then resumed his patronizing smile.

"Why no, my boy, you are not the first on the program ; not at all ; not at all. The first is music by the band ; the next prayer by the principal ; you are not until third."

I have since felt indignation at some people and contempt for others, and yet have held my tongue ; but this double dose of the mixture of the two was overmuch for my size and inexperience. What I said I do not remember ; but I am sure that I said it with full oratorical gusto and passion, for it started a similar feeling in my auditor,—always a sign of eloquence.

"Sit down, sir !" he cried, with a stamp of his foot that shook the room. He then tried to impress upon me the fact that as a mere boy I had nothing to say about whether, when or how I should appear at "The Commencement." He even ventured to accuse me of dishonorable methods in spying out his private business at the printer's.

A few weeks later my father sent me a letter

which he had received from the principal, expressing the hope that I would return to the school for the next term, and ending with the words,—“We are doing exceedingly well by your son.” I replied to my father that it was doubtless true that the school was doing well by me—so many hundred dollars a year—but that I was doing exceedingly ill by the school. Indeed, I refused pointblank to shadow myself again with its door lintel.

With this early taste of “authority” I was in a fair way to grow up a revolutionist. I was just at the age when one needs to believe in the goodness, especially the honesty, of one’s superiors. I knew of a young mastiff, the kindest brute that ever played with a child; but by one unjust cut of a whip he was made to revert to the savage state, and had to be shot. Some men have been unmade in the same way. No mere ethical precepts, however exalted, or however illustrated by the lives of saints and heroes of whom we only read in books, ever make such an impression on our characters as does the conduct of those we actually know and are presumed to reverence for their influential positions. Can you blame me if my favorite Bible text for some time after the incident just recorded was “Beware of men”?

### *A Friendly Rescue.*

When I left the educational incubator described above I was due to enter college, for we matriculated at an earlier age then than nowadays. I real-

ized, however, that I was totally unprepared to do so either in mental habit or definite knowledge of the subjects I was presumed to have studied. But for an ambition, one half pride and the other half sheer doggedness which would not die down in spite of an inward conviction that it was vain, I would have abandoned the purpose of entering any form of professional life. But what could I do? I must live. And for business life I had neither taste nor adaptability; for art or any sort of artisanry no talent.

I felt a strong drawing of my feet toward the Great Highway where so many wander without definite purpose until they lose all power of personal initiative. As I recall those doleful days, and bless Providence that had not really forgotten me, I put my gratitude in the words of Charles Kingsley after a somewhat similar experience:

“Saved—saved from the wild pride and darkling tempests of scepticism, and from the sensuality and dissipation into which my own rashness and vanity had hurried me. Saved from a hunter’s life on the prairies, from becoming a savage, and perhaps worse.”

From casting myself adrift I was saved by several agencies. First was my remembrance of the Old Academy among the mountains, to which my affection turned warmly after my unfortunate experience elsewhere. The ideals there inculcated had left in me something like an inheritance which

my subsequent educational vagabondage had not entirely squandered. Then I received letters from my brother, almost a generation older than I,—letters written from a far western mining camp, in which he begged me never to yield to the vagrant impulse.

Besides, I thought of my religious consecration, an almost infantile act, the wisdom of which I sometimes questioned, but the power of which I never ceased to feel. I still believe that that seemingly blundering boyish act was among the wisest things I have ever done. I couldn't forget that once I had closed my eyes, and reaching out toward that vague Something we call God, I had said "I will!" The echo of that resolution has come back to me a thousand times, "I must!"

I make also this grateful record here. In my home town was a young lawyer of rare ability and fast-growing reputation at the bar. He encouraged me to stick to my purpose regarding a college course, and when I alleged my lack of preparation he said, "Come to my office an hour every morning." Notwithstanding his absorption in his own professional duties he insisted in drilling me in my Latin and Greek, incidentally talking into me some of his own high ideals. My friend has since sat on the Supreme Bench of the State. In common with multitudes I have rendered homage to his robe; but, as one may imagine, I have always seen beneath it his great heart, and have felt more grateful to him than has many a prisoner whom he has discharged.

*A Very Reverential Parenthesis.*

When I had written the above lines about Judge ——, I passed into a state of reverie, a mixed meditation on what occurred, what might have occurred had it not been for the Judge's kindly touch at the opportune moment so many years ago, and the debt of gratitude I owed him. I determined to write to him, and tell him what was in my heart.

“MY DEAR JUDGE ——:

“I am just passing my seventieth birthday, and quite naturally am indulging in reminiscences. One of the most pleasing of my recollections is associated with yourself. I was about sixteen, *en route* for college. I was poorly prepared to enter ——. Malediction on a certain boarding-school that had fed me more on brown bread than on any real brain pabulum! I was out of health, and tempted to abandon a college course. You cheered me up; chinned me with wholesome talk, including some hints about Latin grammar. You helped me tighten up my loin strap and take a deeper breath.

“I imagine that you have no recollection of this. Why should you have? To help a poor fellow was as natural for you as it is for a sugar-maple tree to exude sap. But I cannot forget it. You then headed me toward whatever I have amounted to in professional life. We speak of ‘turning points’ in life. Mine was on the corner of —— and —— Streets, in ——, where I one day stood a long time thinking as I was coming from your office.

“I cannot let my three-quarters of a century run out without reminding you of your goodness, of which I have often thought during the last sixty years. Please accept my belated acknowledgment

of indebtedness. You have had many honors from your contemporaries. May I throw a tiny bouquet into the pile?

“ ‘Howe’er it be, it seems to me  
    ’Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
    And simple faith than Norman blood.’

Pardon my intrusion, my dear Judge; but I just can’t help it.”

This letter brought me a characteristic reply from the patriarch of the legal profession.

“ MY DEAR ——— :

“ Your kind letter of the 30th ult. occasioned a veritable surprise. For all my search into my memory has failed to produce recollection of the incident about which you wrote.

“ That you remembered it and attribute to it some influence on the career, etc.—is exceedingly gratifying to me. An old man at times inclines to feel that he has been of little use to the world. I confess that I read your letter attributing to me some good influence on you with tears of gratitude. I thank you very much for telling me.

“ A few weeks ago I occupied some leisure in dictating to my stenographer my earliest recollections of the buildings in our town, and mentioned the one in which you lived when a boy.

“ Thanking you again,

—————.”

Judge ——— has passed on at the age of eighty.

four. I am very glad that, though at such an age memory is apt to be more of a sieve than a pan, I stopped up one of the holes with so pleasant a reminder.

In contrast with the generous encouragement given me by this friend I may tell something that my father told me many years after. He said, "When you were about to enter college my business was somewhat embarrassed. My lawyer, a man of experience and presumed to know men, advised me not to assume the added responsibility of financing your education. He did not confine himself to the business aspects of the case, but expressed the opinion that you didn't seem to him to be cut out for a professional career. You were too diffident, lacking physique. The money spent on you would probably be wasted, etc. I wasn't sure but that he was right, for you were as yet rather green in the bud. But the tone of the man incensed me. I determined that, come what would to my financial position, I was going to see you through, at least far enough to let you prove yourself. I didn't tell you of Mr. ———'s opinion at the time, for I hate anything that is apt to take the heart out of a young fellow's ambition; and just then I thought that you showed some sign of depression. Now that you are a generation off from danger of juvenile mistakes, it won't hurt you to know that everybody was not inclined to invest in your youthful prospects."

Had I known of this lawyer's opinion of me as a

boy, and had I not been kept afloat by my other friend's kindly words, I would certainly have given up. And then? Well! Perhaps my father's lawyer was the shrewder observer of the two.

The Judge's kindly office at that critical time of my life has prompted me to a resolution, namely, to seek to encourage every young man in reaching his own highest endeavors. Some attempts to do this have brought me the keenest pleasure.

I will insert here, lest I forget it, an incident that occurred many years later. One dark and dismal night I was sitting late in my library. A storm of sleet had driven everybody from the streets, except the most miserable and the most desperate. My front door-bell rang. As the servants had retired, I opened the door myself. No one was there. A few moments later the bell sounded again. A young fellow of nineteen or twenty stood outside. He hesitated to make known his errand, and but for my insistence I think he would have run away without telling it. I saw that he was neither a beggar nor a depredator, and insisted upon his coming into the cheer of the library. He there told me his story. He was out of employment; the times were hard, and nothing offered. He was trying to support his mother and sister, but had reached the last bit of bread. In utter discouragement he had started out in the storm rather than sit idly at home, in useless anticipation of the coming misery. But for his love for those dependent upon him he would have made a quick exit from his personal troubles in some way.

however tragic. His mind seemed to be giving way as if the blinding sleet had entered his brain. Seeing a light in my window he had felt a resistless craving for a kindly word.

I have had some honors in the world, but none more pleased me than this testimony that I was not known in my neighborhood for hardness or indifference to my fellow-men.

The young man confessed that after first ringing the bell he had gone away, doubtless from a sense of dignity that forbade his intruding himself upon a stranger. But that yearning for a human touch brought him back. I cheered the young fellow as well as I could, and promised to stand by him in a small way, for I saw that he was a man of gentlemanly instincts and breeding; yet, like so many others, that he was caught in that first swirl of the maelstrom of discouragement which so often proves fatal. Had I not myself felt a little of the blinding, bewildering spray of that vortex?

[Twenty years later I congratulated that man on his prosperity as a merchant, the community on having so public-spirited a citizen,—and myself for having sat up late one night and answered my own door-bell.]

### *A Teacher Taught.*

While waiting to enter college I acted for a month as teacher of a small district school. The principal, an intimate friend, had been taken ill and requested me to act as his temporary substitute.

He warned me of one boy who would probably give me trouble. This was an overgrown Irish lad whose bulk, like Saul's stature, gave him leadership among the pupils.

"I have flogged John several times," said my friend, "but I would not advise you to attempt it, unless your size sadly belies your pugilistic ability."

The first morning at the school things moved very quietly. I thought, however, that I detected a sort of Donnibrook Fair gleam in John's eye. There was also a forced good-behavior manner about the other boys as they filed out at the noon recess which suggested the fair sky we call a "weather-breeder." The afternoon realized my suspicions. Bedlam reigned.

At the close of the session I asked John to remain a moment. He came up to my desk somewhat in the mien of Goliath of Gath. But I thought I detected in his broad Hibernian face more good-natured deviltry than fiendishness.

"John," I said, "I believe that you are at the bottom of the disorder in the school."

He grinned as if he felt complimented. I wished at the moment that I could put on an extra fifty pounds to my weight; but John's heft didn't allow me to inflate my courage. I remembered the saying of some great general,—“If you are sure you can't whip your enemy don't try to; rather make alliance with him, and let him help you whip some of your other enemies.” The counsel seemed good to me.

"John, sit down here; let's have a talk."

I offered him a chair on the platform where I was sitting. John's grin softened into a smile.

"John, I want you to do something for me."

The smile became quite amiable.

"You can make the boys do anything you like."

He nodded assent.

"Say, John, give up your pranks until Mr. ———, the principal, comes back. I'm not your boss. I'm only your guest in the school. Help me to keep order."

"Do you mean that?" asked John in a somewhat incredulous tone.

"Certainly I do," I replied. "A fellow like you can just as well captain the boys for good as for bad. Try it."

John got up and shook his huge bulk as if he wanted to get himself all together; then looking me straight in the eye he said,

"Mr. ———, I'll do it for you."

We had perfect order from that day on. I learned that before school the next morning John had threatened to wallop any fellow that threw a spit-ball or shuffled his feet during the day.

John and I became chums. He would walk home with me in the afternoons,—a really lovable fellow in spite of a disposition to scrap.

"John," I said, "why didn't you behave as well when the principal was here? I understand that he flogged you several times."

"That's thrue," said John. "He's flogged me to behave, but he never *asked* me to."

I put that answer down in my code of maxims for dealing with one's fellow-men. Often it has come to my mind, and I have no doubt that the timely remembrance of John has saved me from getting the worst of some scrimmages in after life.

## VI

### COLLEGE DAYS

#### *Temptations.*

**I** TAKE little stock in what many writers of advice to young people consider important, namely, decisive moral battles, the issues of which determine subsequent character. Our ethical dispositions are ordinarily slowly, not suddenly, formed. The undermining of morality is apt to be due to insidious sapping beneath the foundation of principles rather than to furious assaults upon character by the great fiend.

Viciousness is often acquired not from violent temptation, but from continuous contact with immoral comrades, as physical disease is engendered by contagion. But more commonly a man is his own tempter; he becomes degenerate through the habit of low-grade thinking, when passion soddens the judgment, and lasciviousness blears one's higher ideals. We are the victims of self-hypnotism, a sort of auto-intoxication with our evil desires. Cicero's advice is always timely,—“Hold off from sensual thoughts, or soon you can think nothing else.”

Yet there are times when every man must go down into the “Valley of Decision,” and either ride out victor or crawl out vanquished. I had my fight

soon after entering college. I fell in with a set of "royal good fellows." Within a few weeks we had exhausted interest in reminiscences of earlier school-days, and swapped to weariness our pet ambitions for the future. The mental vacuum thus created must be filled with something else to save us from ennui, unless we were to break up our pleasant coterie and become student-monks in our separate cells.

Cards were the fashionable panacea for ills produced by over-study, over-eating, over-smoking or laziness. Soon the single game after supper became prolonged into a series which lasted until midnight. We sat with double curtains at the window, thick padded ventilators, dense tobacco smoke and whispered confab.

One night after our usual play either my fairy godmother or my rebellious conscience—or was it the extra pipe of tobacco?—kept me long awake. To weary myself to sleep I began a computation, thus:

Three hours a night for three years—3,600 hours—72,000 pages—180 volumes of solid reading—a mind well-informed to be added to the discipline of the class-room. I felt after that common-sense view of the business of life as if Euclid, Archimedes and the Jack of Diamonds united in calling me a fool.

Another night I supplemented the mathematical calculation with a practical meditation on the psychological line. I observed that the habit of card-

playing was wearing a rut in my brain. Jacks, kings, queens, aces, right bowers, trumps were nesting in my mind; and just as cuckoos occupy the habitats of better birds, and either rot their eggs or throw out the young hatchlings, so these intruders were despoiling me of more profitable thoughts;—indeed, of the ability to think profitably on any subject.

I cannot say that at the time I was influenced by any higher considerations than those of our expediency philosophers, but I determined to break with the card habit. Most of my comrades agreed with me in the philosophy, and some in practice. Our sessions were adjourned *sine nocte*.

One of our number objected to the “moral nonsense,” the “petty pietism,” the “sour puritanism” of our revolt. I may tell of the after experience of a couple of them.

Bob ——— was a fellow of rare brilliancy. He could loaf most of the term time, and with hasty “poling” a week before examination top us all on the grade list. But the gambling habit preyed upon him, and ultimately induced an insane passion for it. Dissipation followed. Ten years later he shot a man over the table.

Another student has since told me a very different experience. I'll call him Tom, lest some of his grandchildren resent my tale-bearing about their revered ancestor. One night a glimmer at his window caught the eye of our Prex, whose love for the boys made him very alert in watching for any signs

of their illness or over-weariness in study ; let us not say that such symptoms were the only ones he searched for, since occasional "rustication" made us suspicious that he had other interest in us. He knocked at Tom's door. After a little delay the lazy string drew the latch.

"Come in!" sounded a sleepy voice. Tom was studying his big Greek lexicon.

"Too bad! Too bad!" said Prex. "I must really speak to Professor ——— about the long lessons he is giving. It is a shame."

Saying which he closed the lexicon, revealing the cards beneath. He then opened the closet door.

"Ah, you have a visitor!" gently pulling out a concealed comrade. "Well! Well! Please put each other to bed. Good-night, gentlemen! Good-night!"

Tom expected discipline. Day after day it was delayed. It never came in any outward form; but Tom declared to me in after life that no "suspended sentence" ever cut the heart out of a criminal as that did. The shame of his deceit was like a rusty nail in his very soul. He couldn't endure the exceeding affability of Prex as they met afterward. One day he entered the sanctum of the president, and threw himself on his mercy.

"It's all right, Thomas," was the response. "I knew your father, and was sure that a man of that stock had only to be made to think in order to straighten himself out. Follow the lesson you have taught yourself, my boy, and God bless you!"

Years after, when Prex died, Tom—then a noted clergyman—went back to the college, sat in his old seat in the chapel during the funeral, and cried like a child.

*Old-time Prex.*

I love to think of old Prex. I have occasion for thinking of him very gratefully which I will not put down here, for this is not a book of confessions. Many people thought of him as only an ordinary man, and wondered how he kept his position so long at the head of a distinguished faculty. He was not a man of genius, unless the ability to fathom the souls of young men and to love them sacrificially be genius. He left nothing in print that added to the lustre of the institution. He was called commonplace; but the commonplace in him ran in deep channels, and full-flooded a life of great usefulness.

To this I can testify “by the book.” After his death, in order to prepare a memorial address, I was permitted to sift a few bushels of miscellaneous papers which he had been in the habit of throwing into bureau drawers. Many of these were yellowed with years and dust-covered, showing that the modest man had never even gratified his reminiscent old age by looking at them. Among these papers I found enough to make the reputation of a half dozen philanthropists and administrators of great affairs.

This was before the days of our great university

endowments. It was not yet the fashion for rich men to memorialize themselves on the college campus with dormitories, chapels and gymnasiums. Those were the "days of small things." College funds were scraped from the bottom of the treasury, or picked off the salaries of the professors. But our commonplace Prex managed it in some way so that no deserving student ever left college for lack of tuition or board money. There was presumed to be an Association for the Aid of Indigent Students; but since Prex's death it has been discovered that he himself was not only the president of the Association, but almost the only donor to its funds.

The college buildings were out of repair; the library and laboratories antiquated; the professors threadbare. Prex took a vacation, roamed over the country, and returned with nearly a half-million dollars; and that at a time when a dollar meant more to the donor than four times the amount to-day. The old buildings were straightened to the plumb; and the backs of the old professors also with the renewed spirit that came to them; while some of the foremost scientists and educators of the world were added to the faculty.

A somewhat extended observation of men and movements has convinced me that the real leaders of their times have not been those who have gathered most *éclat*. I am reminded of a saying of Henry J. Raymond, who during the Civil War, when the country was getting tired of Young Napoleons and high-feathered chieftains, asked for the

promotion of "first-rate second-class men," men who simply did things, and were too busy in doing them to spare time thinking about their reputations.

After the battle of Santiago a public reception was given by his home neighbors to the commander of the victorious fleet. In replying to my complimentary address the Admiral pointed to a man in the hall, who was unknown to most of us, although he resided in our community, and said: "Without that man there would have been no victory. He provided the armament, ammunition, coal and everything pertaining to the fleet. We captains walk the decks and give orders, but we couldn't fire a shot but for the ability and fidelity of men you never hear of."

The remark reminds me of a distinguished scientist who had made a discovery leading to one of the epoch-making inventions of modern times which was christened with his name. In telling how it all came about the sage said: "I don't want you to forget my collaborators. They did more than I. They verified my facts, tested out my theories, encouraged me by a hundred helps, else the thing had not succeeded."

### *College Training.*

My college course was very profitable in some respects. It certainly taught me to measurably command and utilize such faculties as I had, however meagerly I may have been supplied with those of any high order. From observation of later uni-

versity methods I doubt if they are an improvement upon those of a generation ago in real mental training. The studies now prescribed are more extensive, but the studying may be less intensive. The older processes doubtless failed in the matter of breadth. Latin, Greek, Mathematics and Metaphysics did not give enough information to create inspiration for general study. Many fellows who might have been tempted by interesting fields of inquiry to devote themselves to some pursuit creditable to an educated man, became listless over the daily grind, and left college without having discovered their own higher tastes and talents, and dropped into some ancestral or convenient business.

In language we had drill, drill, drill, but nothing about the science of language. If only our Greek professor had given us something like Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop" instead of cross-tabulations of synonyms! If he had only told us of the classic beauties that we were skimming over, as on some glorious stream between mountain headlands, and allowed us to lift our eyes from our paddle-blades! If he had given us the rhythm of the music, and not kept us on the treadmill of mere technique, we might have felt a charm that would have lasted a lifetime.

While in college I learned the rules of rhetoric, but I was not made acquainted with a single passage of literature through the analysis or commendation of it by the professor. When I had passed my fortieth year I turned out some books which the favor-

itism of friends and the business capacity of publishers made moderately popular; but for fifteen years after leaving college I had no dream that I possessed either taste or ability for authorship. My college curriculum did not help me find myself.

In saying this I am not criticizing my own Alma Mater particularly, for it was one of the best in the land. What would I not have given for a professor, say in Greek, like one of my college mates who afterward attained that chair? The professor entered the class-room one hot day in June. Mopping his face with his handkerchief, he said to his students:

“Gentlemen, isn’t it too hot for a recitation in this stuffy room? What would you say to an excursion to the Hill, where we might pursue the real old peripatetic method of study?”

Of course, the suggestion met with a wild outburst of applause that made the room more stuffy with a cloud of floor-dust. The fellows literally rose to the occasion. The professor, quietly looking over his class roll, said:

“Please be seated, gentlemen! Mr. Jones, you will be kind enough to put my remark about the excursion into Greek.”

On another occasion the professor excited quite an enthusiastic debate over the question whether a certain doctrine could be attributed to Plato,—the decision depending upon carefully assaying the very words of the ancient philosopher. That style of teaching went far toward resurrecting the dead into a living language, and at the same time it

quicken the brains of those who had previously thought they had no aptitude for the Greek language.

The man who most helped me in those college days was not a professor, only a class pal, although he in later years became celebrated as one of the foremost instructors in our land and across the seas. Not far from our campus was a canal. My comrade and I were accustomed to saunter down to it after breakfast, beg a ride from the first captain who passed, spend an hour going in one direction, catch a returning craft, and get back in time for the class-room exercise. I recall those canal-boat conversations on the subjects of our lessons and lectures with one near my own age, full of enthusiasm, and withal possessing a genius for those very matters in which within five years he was to instruct his instructors. The deck of the *Mary Ann* or *Jane Smith* was as high a seat of learning as I have ever looked up to.

One hears much of the unloveliness of the college "grind." For all his laboriousness he is a snail in his shell, working only to build out the lobes and convolutions of his own brain. He weaves no genial fellowships with his comrades, and as no single thread, however strong and fair, can compare with the beauty of the tapestry of which it ought to be a part, he is ordinarily dropped into the social scrap-bag. Unless possessed of unusual genius, and so able to burrow down deep into the mysteries of some specialty and come up again with the precious

dust of his findings on his head, he simply buries himself beneath it and is not heard from in after life. The "bookworm," like his prototype from which the sobriquet is derived, is generally to be found hiding away in some literary crack pretty well to the back of things.

There were several such prodigious delvers in my class. By sheer toil and tallow they crept far up the grade roll. What has become of them can be told only by the class secretary, whose duty it was to keep a record of the business and babies of the rest of us.

The greatest study in this world for an educated man is men, not dead "have beens" nor theoretic "ought-to-be's," but those who live about us, who help make us, and whom we are to help make. Society is like a tree of which personalities are the branches and twigs. We live from one another. If one would detach himself and become an air-plant, however ethereal his purpose, he will probably do nothing but fall.

On the other hand, a study of my class roll shows that only those who applied themselves to study with measurable assiduity were afterward successful. The most gifted man in the class was one who dissipated in brain work, if not in bodily passion. Our professor of rhetoric on reading one of his essays wrote across it the sad warning,—“The writer of this has too much ability to waste,”—words which were prophetic of the man's after career. It is not that so much time is wasted in college, but

that at this formative period the habit of intellectual concentration is not established. The will is just as much of a factor in professional as in business success. No shapeliness of the boat will win the race without the trained eye and hardened hand upon the helm. I do not recall a classmate who afterward reached distinction who was not well within the first quarter of the roll for scholarship.

Possibly my class list is unfortunate as a test of this matter. The Civil War disrupted us before graduation. Many of the finest fellows fell in the Confederate or Federal service. It was a sad day, that after the attack upon Fort Sumter, when we Northern boys gave the last hand-grasp to nearly half the class as they clambered into the train for Dixie. A few of us met again, sometimes in the aftermath of the battle-field. But our class reunions have been sadly small in attendance.

Personally I think that I maintained my reputation as an ordinary man by wasting my time neither in grinding for honors nor in lazy indulgence. I know that my recitations and conduct sometimes bewildered my professors when making up their grade lists. Some years after graduation I became somewhat intimate with one of them. One day he remarked: "———, I have often thought that I did not grade you right when you were under me." I replied, "Professor, I accept your apology." He quickly responded, "Hold on, my boy, I am not apologizing. I am only berating myself for having allowed myself to be taken in by you."

Our professor in rhetoric inspired me to do my level best in preparing a certain essay. My last record with him had put me not far from the head of the class. So I grew quite chesty when he remarked of my new attempt, "This will materially raise your grade." But unfortunately for the college, and especially for myself, the good man died before he had made up the grades for the term. The essay on which my pride had poised itself so complacently was reviewed by another professor, who quietly dropped it into the refuse heap with the scribblings of the fag-end of the class. Which of the two experts was wiser in his judgment I don't care to decide. I certainly learned the valuable lesson not to rest one's equanimity and peace of mind upon others' opinion of your work or character. Do the best you can, and keep away from the bulletin-board.

*An Amateur Tramp.*

Among my classmates was one whom we called L'Allegro, for he always brought with him

"Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides."

I can recall no single expression or action of Ned's that showed great seriousness; yet I suspected that he was a man of real and perhaps over-deep convictions. Like a full-headed spring his surface bubbles came from the bottom. At times, in the interludes of our mutual banter, I would detect a change of his appearance that start-

led me. His smile would die down too far, and be lost in a look of pain, almost of fright. But the tragic mask was replaced by the comic at the slightest possibility of a pun, a joke or a tickling match with any of us. I imagined that his chronic feeling when alone might be that of some horrid nightmare from which he sought to shake himself awake.

One day he gave us a burlesque oration against all civilization, mimicking the manner and tones of one of our professors. He compared society to a pachyderm's skin or a mollusc's shell that stifled the best that was in human nature. He glorified the life of the tramp.

When I objected to this view of life Ned challenged me to a practical trial whether it were not the happiest lot of man. I accepted his "dare," and at the beginning of our vacation started off with him for a month of aimless delights. We took in our pockets only enough money to prevent actual starvation, or to pay passage home in case of accident, or if, unlike the Israelites in the desert, our feet might swell and prevent our tramping.

We journeyed one day merrily, sustained by the double breakfast we had eaten in view of unforeseen possibilities. By the afternoon we were conscious of the need of something beside tightening our belts and taking a deeper breath of resolution. We encouraged each other to resist the temptation excited by feeling the loose change in our pockets, but not having as yet cultivated enough cheek to be actual

beggars we determined to go supperless. We selected for our lodging a clump of trees on the bank of a pretty stream.

"Here we can be as happy as the birds," said Ned.

"If only like them we could fill our crops with seeds and worms," I pessimistically added.

Ned danced a jig, and sang the chorus of an old song:

"We'll be gay and happy still."

"That will do instead of saying grace, since we have nothing to eat," added the irrepressible fellow. "Who was it that said of Ben Franklin famishing on the streets of Philadelphia, 'He starveth his flesh that his soul might regale itself on divine philosophy'? We'll see before morning if 'divine philosophy' is not chiefly due to yeast."

We were looking round for a place to make our burrows for the night, like the rabbits, when our quiet was broken into by a group of young people from a neighboring village who had chosen that spot for a sunset picnic. They at first showed an intention to dispossess us of our lodgings. But Ned's courtesy and mirth shone through his disreputable appearance like a diamond in the dust. I believe he could have walked past a eunuch into a sultan's harem with that graciousness of manner. His inimitable drollery set the party of newcomers into such good humor that the young ladies insisted upon our joining them. So our first day's experi-

ence of the hard lot of the socially ostracized class ended in a feast of boned turkey, sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, lemon pie, cake and ice-cream, instead of the "bitter herbs" of discontent.

An old proverb says that "the gods take care of babes, beggars and imbeciles." "How much wisdom there is in that!" remarked my comrade a couple of hours later, as staring at the stars until his eyes blinked he pulled his slouched hat over his face and with a kick bade me good-night.

Our second day was equally illuminating as to the griefs of the disgruntled trampers on the Broad Highway. I tried to induce a canal-boat captain to give us a lift. He suggested our driving the mule on the tow-path as better fitting our condition. But Ned so jollied the man that his wife—who sailed with him *à la* Cleopatra with Antony—appeared at the cabin door; a good-looking, motherly sort of woman, who had accompanied her husband, if not to save him from any perils of the journey, at least to guard him from worse dangers of the port whither he was going. Whether her face was cracking at Ned's tomfoolery or her heart was breaking at us two unfortunate and homeless lads, I do not know; but she made us share the bacon and corn-bread, the odors of which poured up by the side of the bit of stovepipe that protruded above the cabin, as agreeable to our nostrils as the perfumes of Araby the Blest which are wafted to sailors along that coast.

Our new friends entertained us as humanely as

if they had picked us from a derelict in the North Sea. We slept our second night out under an oilcloth that was used to batten the hatchway, each of us with a bag of oats for a pillow. It is wonderful how one can become reconciled to adversity if he will only yield gracefully to the necessities of the situation, as a dog relaxes all his muscles to let them sink into the unevennesses of what he may be lying on. If we cannot pad the world we can pad ourselves.

I had scarcely covered my head with the oilcloth when I was charmed by the music of Ned's "We'll be gay and happy still," ending with a snore that signalled his entrance into the Land of Nod, as in olden times a stranger approaching another's demesne was expected to sound a trumpet. Next morning nothing but our mutual vow of a month's poverty prevented our accepting the invitation of our host and hostess to voyage with them a hundred miles to their destination. Fattened with an oatmeal, buckwheat cake and coffee breakfast, and with pockets stuffed with sandwiches, which the thoughtful "mate" had provided for our lunch, we resumed our pilgrimage. We did not envy an unwashed monk in his refectory, though Ned declared his purpose to take orders in the cowed fraternity, if he could find one with sufficiently peregrinate rules and regulations.

The third night we attempted to lodge under a haycock adjacent to a country mansion. The gardener was a stupid fellow who could not appreciate

Ned's banter, and ordered us off the place. Our chatter brought the owner—a gentleman whom I often met in after years in his own city drawing-room. At first he was inclined to side with his man, but after a few moments' talk with us he melted. I heard him say to his factotum, "Job, these fellows are not hoboes. Let them sleep in the carriage house. I'll risk their doing any harm."

The next morning Job started us out by introducing us to the cook, who gave us a fine breakfast in the kitchen, which she supplemented with a package marked "Lunch," and a message from the proprietor asking to be remembered to our respective fathers, whoever they might be. Ten years afterward I reminded this gentleman of the incident. He replied, "I recall it well. You boys hadn't been long enough on your escapade to acquire the manners of the road. I knew from your talk that you were college fellows. By the way, what has become of your pal? His bright face has haunted me often since. I wanted to bring you both into the house, but my wife wouldn't let me. She was afraid of Confederate spies, though we were nearer the Canada border than Mason and Dixon's Line."

The fourth night we slept in a sawmill. It was on the edge of a town where I had once been at school. I must, of course, see the familiar grounds again. While wandering about who should meet us but the principal. He recognized me at once. With a look of profoundest pity he put his hand on my shoulder.

“Why! Why, what has brought you to this condition?” I told our story.

“Well! Well! Well! But you know I always punished boys for deceit. You must take your discipline.”

Said discipline was administered by himself, his wife and daughter at a lunch table in their private apartment;—a place which I had never been invited to enter during my school-days.

What a difference between my rigid old martinet preceptor and the same man now that I met him socially rather than pedagogically! As we went away Ned philosophized on the hardening influence of authority. A man might have a natural disposition as soft as the inside of a crab, but the habit of bossing boys would grow a shell about it. He would never be a school-teacher. He'd be a hangman first; for that individual has a chance to jolly up the victims before he executes them, which a disciplinarian never does.

Next night we slept in an open field, under the big comet of 1861 which spanned from horizon to zenith.

“Star-dust on the outside of your stomach instead of powdered sugar icing on the inside! How do you like it?” Before I could reply Ned was asleep.

Next day we struck Lake George. That Paradise halted our wayward feet. We invested the bulk of our reserve treasury in hiring a canoe, and stocking it with boiled ham, several loaves of bread and some

fishing tackle. The farmer of whom we bought these articles might have driven a hard bargain with us, but I have reason to believe that his two buxom daughters threw in the loaves gratuitously, and his wife added a handleless frying pan, while the whole family waved us *bon voyage* from the bank as we paddled away.

I have often since visited the Lake; have put up in its palatial hotels; have cut its opalescent surface with the prow of a motor-boat; but I have never again found such wealth of enjoyment as we then drew down from its skies and fished up from its waters. For several weeks we slept on the ground with the overturned canoe for our roof, lulled by the squealing of hedgehogs and the cry of loons,

“Till o’er our brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
With leaden legs and batty wings did creep.”

Showers often drenched us to the skin, but Ned’s mirth warmed the cockles of our hearts. “We’ll be gay and happy still” answered the swish of the rain and the tossing of the waves.

We one day had a narrow escape. An elegant canoe approached ours. In it were two young ladies. My advice was to flee, for after several weeks of roughing it—and tearing it—our unchanged clothes had become quite as disreputable as our unshaven chins. But Ned was game for a new adventure, and steered alongside. The ladies proved to be old acquaintances in the city. They

were spending the summer in an elegant family villa on the lakeside.

We were safe while sitting down in the canoe. To have risen might have toppled us over; but, more disastrously than that, it would have revealed an indescribable condition of our apparel which would have outlawed Saint Francis. Ned came near lying when he said that we were putting up at a fisherman's lodge down the Lake. The ladies invited us to dine with them that evening. Several friends of a rather fashionable set were also to be guests. A little dance after dinner and a paddle to our camp in the late moonlight! Good heavens, to *our* camp! Notwithstanding my agonizing facial protest Ned accepted the invitation. He was simply intoxicated with the ridiculousness of the affair; and could no more restrain his anticipation of the fun than he could help upsetting the canoe in the first shallow water, that our apparel might at least have a laundering before exhibiting it.

On taking account of our wardrobe even Ned was sobered. His shoes were busted. My trousers were entirely out at one knee. His were in worse plight, nearly torn in twain, his shirt making a signal of distress as it protruded at half-mast from his rear.

We had no means of sending a recall of our acceptance of the dinner invitation except a scrawl on a soiled bit of paper which we coaxed a fisherman to leave at the villa, and which stated that we had been suddenly called away,—which was true enough; for the call was from our sense of propri-

ety which suggested that we should propel our "camp" several miles further down the Lake, and keep a sharp outlook for the approach of swan-like maidens. After that we kept to the natives. One of these was the oldest inhabitant of that region, a man whose memory went back to the days when Indian canoes specked the Horicon, bears were the scavengers at kitchen doors, and wolves the guardians of the hen-roosts. Our new friend was by profession a bee-hunter. With him we climbed the mountains, followed the swarming hosts, looted their honey camps. The old man diagrammed for us the bays; and at the spot where an imaginary line between a gray rock on one shore and a pine tree on the other crossed the imaginary line between a dark spot on the hillside and a tiny islet just peeping out of the water, we caught the biggest bass, the mere telling of which would swamp my reputation for veracity. We swapped our catch for the hog, hominy and honey of our patron, and thus commercialized our friendship to mutual profit.

We spent a few days in the neighborhood of Fort Ticonderoga, and perhaps excited the suspicions of the natives that the ghosts of English, French or Indian spies were revisiting the scenes of their adventures in the flesh. Ned's incessant "We'll be gay and happy still" echoed among the ruins. His hilarity was both sunshine and bird-song.

Yet all through these years since, the remembrance of my old comrade has given me the most intense feeling of loneliness. It makes the mystery

of life wrap me as in a dense fog saturating me to the heart's core. Although I had lodged almost under his own skin, I never really knew him. Did he know himself? Or did he know himself too well? Now and then as I watched him at the oars his face would become tragic. Were there beneath the glimmering surface of his soul murky depths where devil-fish made their habitat and tore him?

A few years later Ned committed suicide!

But that attempt for home-bred and home-returning boys to understand the life, especially the real inner life, of the social waif, the industrial outcast, the roofless man anywhere! Our temporary hardship, with an occasional wet skin or empty stomach, only added sauce to the appetite for more of the same sort. The fact that, though we were scant of ready silver, we yet had indulgent fathers who would at any moment of real exigency send bank-drafts, prevented our acquiring the least conception of the lot of the real tramp or unfortunate, his hopelessness of ever bettering his condition, and the slough of bestiality in which he generally flounders.

From that summer's experience I have never taken the least stock in the reports of the well-to-do who have gone slumming or nomading in order to find out how the "other half" live. The difference is that between penury and a picnic. To know what a social derelict is one must be one.

Let me foil this story of Ned with one of a directly opposite drift and significance.

During the decade between '50 and '60 the coun-

try was showered upon by multitudes of fake German students. The unsuccessful attempts at revolution in the Vaterland had led many patriots to migrate. Against these the various little tyrannies into which Germany was then divided had been atrociously severe. Many of these men fled across seas, and became our best citizens. Their kindly reception here started swarms of impostors. A "poor German student" became the signal of wariness about our college towns.

A college mate and I came upon one such derelict. He was choring in a barber shop. Hearing us talk of our university the man introduced himself as one of the guild. I said to my comrade, "Give him a volley of Latin. That will test him." My friend, shaking his finger at the stranger, declaimed the opening sentence of Cicero's oration against Cataline,—"*Quousque tandem*," etc. "How long, O Cataline, wilt thou abuse our patience?" The fellow accepted the challenge in true German fighting spirit, and continued the quotation, until our aching sides begged him to stop. A rapid-fire attack from Homer brought us an equally disastrous defeat. The man scanned the lines most beautifully, and by his gesticulation and facial expression showed that he was *en rapport* with their meaning.

This young student had left his university in Bavaria between sundown and sun-rising to escape arrest for some political offense; had been a soldier in the Crimean War, and had been pursued by avenging gods, like another Ulysses, until he landed in

New York. He had no money, no training in business, no knowledge of any handicraft, and, for imaginable reasons, did not care to put himself in communication with his people in the old country. My friend and I helped him as we could out of our rather slender purses, and secured him a position as instructor in a small school. From this position he advanced rapidly. Within three years he was an honored professor in one of our universities. Quite naturally we were lifelong friends. A little while ago I sat before a beautiful memorial window in the chapel of that university. The glass was blazoned with his name. Very impressive were my thoughts as I contrasted this with his name as he first gave it to me in a little shop where, forty years before, he was doing chores to earn an honest living, and watching for an opening to a higher level.

### *A Political Puzzle.*

I must here record an incident that occurred during my college life, the remembrance of which has had a lasting influence upon me. It has been like one of those confluent streams that pour into and enlarge the flow, and perhaps change the quality of the water in a river.

In the latter part of February, 1861, Mr. Lincoln made that eventful journey from his home in Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, for his inauguration. A group of fellow-students went to a neighboring city to see and hear him. Notwithstanding he had been for months in the lime-light of the

political campaign, and that every attainable fact of his biography had been paraded by partisan favor or prejudice, he was still an almost unknown man. His ability as an executive statesman had not yet been revealed, and was doubted by many.

While listening to his brief speech I looked up at his tall form as the impersonation of the riddle of American history. Was he of presidential timber? I was prepared either to disparage or to applaud. But Mr. Lincoln said nothing to provoke criticism. Was he a prophet who carefully shrouded his foresight as in the hooded mantle? Or did the "rail-splitter" still predominate in him? While the few words he said did not display his genius, they awakened confidence in his character. The listener felt that the manhood in him was true and strong and consecrated to the great issue before the country. Was he homely? I do not know. His face was so full of intelligence, kindness, and patriotic intensity that I thought only of the soul that illumined it. Was he awkward? Were his arms too long, and his trousers bagged at the knees? I don't know. The grace of his sentiment was in every movement, and that gave him a kind of gracefulness which no goodliness of form and no art of gesticulation could have imparted. For instance, seeing a group of ladies gazing at him from an adjoining balcony, he saluted them as courteously as Lord Chesterfield could have saluted the Queen:—"Ladies, we're inspecting one another, and I am sure that I have the advantage." I remembered that somebody had said

that "the gentle soul is the mistress of gentle manners."

This incident of seeing Mr. Lincoln has a place in my biographic recollection because it started a line of thought which has strongly influenced me in all my reading of history and observation of passing current events. How the great movements of the world hinge upon individuals, their peculiarities of mind and disposition! And how often these men owe their pivotal positions, not to themselves, their ability, or their ambition, but to circumstances, such as their availability in certain emergencies, the balance of parties, their chancing at a certain moment to be at the spot where the lime-light happened to fall, so they became known; or, it may be due to a fact that might seem to indicate their unfitness, namely, that they were comparatively unknown when others in prominence had excited special animosities, which prevented their being chosen for leadership. We speak of the "philosophy of history"; but who on earth understands that philosophy? The hazards of history are more mingled and startling.

This line of thought might lead one to pessimism, were it not that the subsequent career of Mr. Lincoln suggested a diviner Providence guiding human affairs, and that great men are made wiser than they themselves or others knew.

### *The Uncivil War.*

As I was completing my academic career the

Civil War crashed suddenly about us. Far-seeing men had anticipated the overflow of the cauldron of sectional excitement. Even we boys were prophetic in our declamations of what was impending. But when at last the mass of intermingled political passions actually poured over the rim of the cauldron we were as much surprised as we were horrified. The fact was that in our souls we had never felt the possibility of what we had so certainly predicted. Sheep will desert the slopes of the volcanoes when their feet feel the tremor; but men with all their foresight are often more stupid. We, in those days, were scorched with the lava before we heard the alarm which our own judgment had sounded.

One of our professors, who had been a most determined alarmist, prophesying the imminence of the coming catastrophe, brought the news to the campus—"Why, gentlemen, the impossible has happened! South Carolina has fired upon Fort Sumter!" The youthful enthusiasm of us undergraduates quickly outran the more cautionary counsel of our elders. In spite of the order of the faculty that lectures and recitations should not be interrupted, the whole body of students went on a strike. The bell-rope was detached, the belfry hatched down, and from the roof of our main building, together with several of our brazen-tongued embryo orators, I made my first appeal to the "listening world," which world consisted of the students and the entire population of the town, who were gathered by the excitement. Our professor of physics brought out

from the laboratory an immense bar of steel, upon which he beat with a hammer the call of class-room duty. But we refused to recognize this unhistoric substitute for that old bell of authority which had called our fathers a century ago. We lashed a stout flagpole to the finial of the cupola; and "Old Glory" was unfurled. There it remained during the entire war, until it flapped its last shreds in the gentle breeze of peace.

The next night after my début a public meeting was held in a large hall of the town, addressed by several statesmen of repute. The students became impatient of the deliberation and temporizing tone of these noted speakers. We took the platform, and harangued the crowd in terms which would have excited the envy of the ghost of Demosthenes, as he recalled his Phillipics against the Macedonian invaders. We at least equalled him in the amount of fire and smoke emitted. No doubt my grandmother of revolutionary memory commended the spirit of her descendant's patriotism, whatever she may have thought of his unfledged and flopping oratory.

Associated with my recollections of these exciting days is one of peculiar sadness. Many of our students were from the South; and among them some of my closest companions. They were recalled to their homes. The railroads entering Dixie soon became blocked. Virginians and Georgians and men from the Carolinas were compelled to take long journeys around by the West. For this their

purses were insufficient. The Northern boys shared their pockets with their unfortunate comrades. It was a bitter day when, at the railroad station, we took the hands of these fellows, with whom we had grown up from boyhood to manhood, and bade them Godspeed through the gathering uncertainties. I realized then for the first time something of the meaning of a disrupted country; but the full significance of it all was not felt until, as the months went by, we heard of one and another of that band who had fallen upon the field; or as we got a glimpse of a familiar face among the huddled crowds in our prison camps, or as some captured Northern boy felt the coddling of a familiar hand on a Southern field. A few of our comrades survived the war. Some reached distinction in the military command of the Confederacy; but alas, how many were starred on our class roll as we called that roll at our reunions in after years!

As I think of the splendid characters of some of these men, as unselfishly devoted to their States as we of the North were devoted to the Union, I find myself rebelling against the fate which dragged them through the poverty of homes destroyed, the horrors of mutilated bodies of themselves and their kindred, and the untimely ending of many young lives so full of promise.

These experiences have given me an intense hatred of war. It is sometimes justified and necessary, but only when by the carnage there can be established such justice and freedom and possible

pursuit of happiness as shall make wars in the future less liable to occur. This was true of our Civil War, when the indissoluble Union of the States and Emancipation of the slave class were absolutely indispensable to the future peace of the land.

## VII

### OUT IN THE WORLD

#### *Choice of Profession.*

**I** ENVY the man who has early discovered that his abilities and his tastes run in the same direction; that what he most likes to do is just what he can do best. This gives one a double power. It is that of a stream that has both volume and sufficient declivity to insure a rush of water. Genius for an art or occupation, when accompanied by an enthusiasm for its details, is generally the prophecy of success.

But alas for the man whose talents and tastes run in opposite directions! Taste without talent for its pursuit leaves one a mere dilettante; talent without taste for its exercise makes one a machine.

In my college days I found myself thus badly put together in my mental make-up. I likened myself to an elephant that had a trunk at either end—or more likely a tail—and didn't know which way to go. I suppose that there was something oratorical about my voice, manner or rhetorical glibness that led the fellows to select me as their spokesman on some show occasions. But oratory was my especial abomination. I never could declaim. To get up

before others, and give voice, gesticulation and facial expression to a sentiment written by somebody else made me feel like the ass in lion's skin. I could psychologize by the hour over Hamlet's "To be or not to be"; but to spout the words would be as uncomfortable for me as to submit to an operation for the dropsy. Similarly I hated to formally debate for practice or in competition for honors, though I could wrangle with the worst of my classmates on the slightest provocation. To pronounce an oration—I had rather be choked. For an hour before I had to make the slightest exhibition of myself "stage fright" gripped me from my knees upward. It brought on headache, indigestion—indeed, physicked me thoroughly. And so it has been for sixty odd years.

Yet—and here's the misery of it—I *could* talk. When "screwed up to the sticking point" I succeeded on the rostrum. Here was my talent, if such it might be called; at least my knack. How I wanted to dig a hole and bury it! Jonah could not have hated his mission to Nineveh worse than I rebelled against what seemed the call of duty to preachify on any topic. Yet upon graduation I found myself en route for a profession in which tongue and cheek are by some regarded as the essential adjuncts of study. I began my flight like a bird gifted with a goodly pair of wings but with rheumatic joints. And the rheumatism has never left me.

I had a classmate who was similarly afflicted. He

was the best speaker of us all, but sometimes almost wished that he had been tongue-tied, so that one professional avenue be closed to him. He entered the ministry of his denomination. In one of his letters referring to his choice he wrote, "Passion is said to be destiny. Is it so? Or is some apparent adaptedness?—How much in the dark we are! And yet the fearfulness of a mistake!"

But he made no mistake. As I write the news comes to me that "dear old Sam"—I think his ghost will be better pleased with that designation than that of "the Reverend Doctor"—has just died, honored for his work during more than a half century.

Would I to-day choose the same profession I then chose? Doubtless; for I can see no other in which I could be more helpful to my fellow-men. Yet I have gone to my public duties "like the quarry slave scourged," and so it will be until my last speech raises its welt on my soul.

In such an experience of—I will not say ability, but rather adaptability—and taste warring within one I am not alone. Men in all occupations lament it. The most genial of our American poets used to complain to me that his daily life was to "howl like a hyena for six hours in the Stock Exchange, then go to his library too tired to think." What might not that man have been if his rare ability as a financier and the needs of his large family had not diverted his soul from the banks of the Elysian stream!

A young friend graduated from Annapolis. During his "Middy" days he showed rare ability in naval science, and was ticketed for early advance. But he hated the sea, and especially hated war, and soon left the navy to enter civil life. When the Spanish War broke out, from simple sense of duty he volunteered his service. His heroism and naval skill at Santiago won him high honors duly accorded by Congress. What a sea-captain he would have made if he had had as much love for the waves as for his country, and had possessed the real Viking soul!

Dr. ——— was one of the foremost surgeons of the land before the day of anæsthesia. He often spoke of his sickening at the sight of blood; of how the making an incision in another's flesh was almost as painful as if he were cutting his own. Before a serious operation he would sometimes fall upon his knees and cry, "O God, why must I do this thing?" Yet he knew that he could do "this thing" as perhaps no other man could do it, and he said "I must." He knew his anatomy so thoroughly, and by force of clear grit could so steady his nerve that the knife went without error along the thin line between life and death. For forty years he did "this thing," until nature made his hand to tremble. He then spoke of the "saving grace of palsy."

I can appreciate this. I have dreaded an audience so that I could almost pray for laryngeal paralysis. This has proved a great hindrance in all my

career. I have declined many invitations to address my fellow-citizens upon topics with which circumstances made me familiar. I have shirked my duty simply because overborne at the moment by this temperamental, but wholly irrational, shrinking; and have afterward been cudgelled by my conscience for my cowardice. In Boards of Direction I frequently allow action to be taken without contrary argument even when I feel that my colleagues are clearly in the wrong,—and this from a mere animal timidity to get upon my feet.

To compare little things with great, I comfort myself for this temperamental weakness by recalling that John Bright always came to breakfast complaining that it was a chilly day if he had to make a speech before night. A distinguished pulpit orator told me that once in his early ministry he engaged to preach in a country church; but that, on approaching the building, he was seized with such fright that he ran away and hid himself in the woods until the hour of service had passed and the farmers had driven home. But how he could preach when he had to!

I have often wished that I enjoyed hearing myself talk, as some of my professional neighbors evidently do. A friend tells me of the thrill he experiences when in the swing of his oratory. The gladness when the flashing eyes of his audience show that he is holding them *en rapport* with his own sentiment and emotion, he declares is better than a feast with the houris in a Mohammedan Paradise. The ec-

stasy of his rhetorical flights must be something similar to that of an aviator soaring above the crowds who gaze gaping at his skill. If it is a man's business to speak, how providential that the wagging of his tongue pleases him, as the wagging of his tail pleases a dog!

While on this topic of ill-put-together brains and heart I may tell of a "happy find" on the part of a friend of mine. He was a born artist. With a few strokes of his pencil he would depict any object about him, a flower, a bird, the face of a man, and even the character that lies so thinly veiled back of the countenance. How he rollicked in his amateur art! To this delight was added a passionate love of nature. From the spider's web in the corner of the room to the white summer clouds that crawled over the sky the visible universe was his playground.

His *bête noire*, however, was business, whatever form it might take. To be a drummer, a solicitor of trade was his special abomination. Yet he had an ingratiating manner that was worth a fortune, and the need of "turning the penny" drove him into life insurance! It happened in some way that a few of his offhand amateur sketches got into a magazine, and about the same time one of his breezy pen-pictures of a woodsy scene was hung in a gallery. He received an overture from a publisher for more of what he called only his "inky spasms." He found that he could support himself with pencil and pen. Soon he became one of our best paid delineators. His enthusiasm for what was now his life-work was,

as the word signifies, an *en-theos*, an inspiration both of vision and of joy. He was as happy—well! as one of his own pictures. And that is saying much, for all America has enjoyed them. But think of ——, who could transform a bit of cardboard into a sylvan stream with the sprites dancing through its sparkling ripples, or create the illusion that a robin was twitching its tail because its mouth was open, or make his brush tell that it was five o'clock of a June day instead of three o'clock in July—spending his own and your time in inducing you to save your earnings for the sake of your unborn children, and incidentally pocket a commission for himself!

### *The Wife.*

As these are the reminiscences of an ordinary man, I pass over many things that were peculiar to my individual circumstances, and keep to the road of common experience. A very commonplace thing happened to me,—I fell in love.

All young men—all full men—do. I am enough of a realist to hold that femininity, like a condition of the atmosphere, say the subtle influence of the springtime, affects a healthy young fellow before the ethereal substance of femininity has materialized into the definite feminine. One of the most complete victims of the passion was a comrade who never married simply because he never discovered the embodiment of his ideal. He talked incessantly about "*her*," even wrote sonnets to her eyelashes

and slipper buckles, angel-ized her as thoroughly as Dante did his Beatrice in Vita Nuova, and with the same purpose:

“Non perch’ io creda sue laude finire,  
Ma ragionar per isfogar la mente;”

not because he imagined he could tell all her charms, but he discoursed only to ease his own soul. The sheet-lightning of “the eternal feminine” always flashed about my friend, though it shot no bolt to strike him. In which respect, as in the merit of his lines, he and the great poet were quite diverse. And I too.

It is said of Telemachus that he was saved from Cupid’s arrows by Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, who threw her shield before his breast, whereupon Venus and her *enfant terrible* took flight—Minerva, being wise, did not interfere in my case. If I tell about this adventure I know that I run the risk of being discredited by popular novelists and their readers; for I cannot recall in modern romances of the grand passion any description of female character resembling that of the woman who won my heart, or the record of any experience of captivated swains that parallels my own.

This surly criticism of bookmakers will reveal the reason why I have no interest in the ordinary love story. Give me a yarn of swash-buckling, intriguing, courtiering, vagabonding, or of adventures on the high seas. They entertain me, because I don’t know enough of these things to dispute the veri-

similitude of the descriptions. But regarding love affairs I am expert, and therefore skip the pages that romancers and their unmated readers generally regard as most delicious. I appreciate the poet who said, "I long to talk with some old lover's ghost who died before the god of love was born."

"I am going to introduce you to a young lady whom you will like, unless you are a duller fellow than I have credited you with being," said one of my old-time instructors whom I was visiting.

I glanced at the Professor's wife,—one of the most beautiful, queenly, motherly, big-sisterly women that ever sacrificed herself to become the caretaker of a grubber of linguistic roots.

"Professor," I replied, "I am prepared to fall in love with the lady at sight, on the recommendation of a man who himself has demonstrated his good judgment of the sex."

The Professor's wife frowned. "I warn you, young man, not to attempt such flattery with the lady in question, or our introduction will prove useless."

I met Miss X in company of a bevy of her companions. She was not so beautiful as Miss A, nor so vivacious as Miss B. Miss C could talk more glibly of art and literature, and Miss D more flatteringly asked questions about a young man's professional ambitions. Miss E smiled more opportunely and winsomely. Any one of these would have attracted more attention from a fellow during the first half-hour. But somehow before the even-

ing was over I felt better acquainted with Miss X than with the others. Did she possess a clairvoyant power of reading my thoughts so that from the start our conversation was a little deeper than the surface conventionalities?

I have met and admired many women gifted with the ability in a few words to draw out a man, to assay his tastes, to catch the key of his prevailing disposition and sentiments. This is a valuable accomplishment for any woman who is called upon to entertain in society. It makes her the best of hostesses, especially appreciated by a new acquaintance given, as I was, to bashfulness. I call it an accomplishment; for, while some have an intuitive talent in that way, it is generally an acquired tact, and belongs to the high art of social courtesy.

Miss X did not draw me out. I came out as naturally as a pansy expands in the sunshine. From that first evening I felt perfectly at home with her. I appreciated Buddha's feeling when he first saw the woman who was to be his wife. He imagined that she must have been his companion in some former state of existence, on the tree or in the den. Miss X's mind and mine seemed to me like two streams that, however different their sources, when they touch flow in the same channel. Our ideals lay in the same direction, although I realized from the first that hers were higher, purer and more healthful than mine could ever be without her tuition.

As our acquaintance grew I found that in intellectual opinions we often differed. She frankly dis-

sented from some of my views, even thought them preposterous and told me so; but our moral judgments concurred;—at least they did after she had fully revealed her own. In the glow of her conscience I clearly saw what was, or ought to be, in my own. We had the same root convictions on matters that count for character.

She was wiser than I. Maybe I saw more things, but she saw things in a clearer light, and convinced me that I often saw only mirages. I could out-argue her, but in the end she got the decision of the court of common sense. By some short-cut of intuition she reached the vital point before I did, and awaited my coming along afterward, and with a smile that meant “I told you so,” though she never uttered such teasing words.

Of course, I wasn’t in love with her,—yet. I only felt a restfulness when in her company, such as no other woman or man ever gave me. When tired or worried with professional work my feet were drawn to her home. We talked about nothing strictly personal, certainly nothing sentimental. Neither sought to intrude within the other’s life, but naturally we walked together in many common paths.

I had a problem; how account for this spell? When I tried to solve the problem which I felt was entangling me I discovered a luminous centre to it; it was herself. I had to confess that my interest in her was more than interest; it was attachment. Would I dare to tell her that? Not yet. I once broke a beautiful vase with my clumsy handling.

The perfume of our friendship was too precious for me to risk spoiling it by any unwarranted obtrusiveness. I hoped that the Fates who spin our life threads would intentionally twist ours together, and waited patiently for their dénouement.

Very happily for me I at length discovered that she was interested in me as an individual specimen of the *genus homo*; that she really cared to know what I was doing because it was I that did it. Although I knew that she despised an egotist, she let me talk about myself. Her kindness led me to tell her things that I told no one else, and I got my reward in her undoubted sympathy or wise encouragement. My foolish notions she frankly corrected; but I took no more umbrage at it than did her crochet-work when she unravelled the false stitches.

Now in all this there was at first not the least experience of sex fascination. I thought of her, not so much as a woman, but as a kindred soul; like what a man might have been to me if only he had a soul ten fathoms deeper than any man's soul ever was.

One day I told her what I thought of her; how I prized her companionship. If I had thought out my words beforehand I would in all probability have said less. But that little Winged Imp tricked me, and made me say I know not what. But it must have been just the right thing, for she replied that it made her very happy to know that she could be helpful to me. And somehow the word "always" passed between us. Maybe neither of us said it. If

was, perhaps, only telepathic. Maybe nothing was said for the next ten minutes. My memory of that time is awfully mixed. To the end of our married life she insisted that we had no engagement; that the ring was an afterthought. Of one thing I am sure, there was no scene worth reporting; no surprise, for it was as if it had always been intended to be so; no coyness, she was too frank for that; but as I looked into her face I saw a new light there. I knew it to be a woman's love; but what a woman's love really means it took forty years to find out; and even yet the story has not been told. I wonder at it as I do at the sunrise, the starry skies, and what God may be.

One may call this too prosaic. I prefer prose to poetry in contract deeds. There was nothing to be sentimental about. The real sentiment had been running very deep for months, deeper than either of us knew until that moment. We were not interested in its mere ripples.

Nearly half a century of such a woman's love! Do you wonder that I don't like "love stories"? Geese cackling when angels are passing overhead.

### *Downs and Ups.*

After entering my chosen profession I attained in it an early success. This statement may seem to invalidate the claim of my story to be that of an ordinary man, since it is the sad fact that most men reach a position of abiding competence only when their failing physical powers cease to supply the

zest for good living, or some malady denies them the ease for which they have labored, or, it may be, that bereavements have broken those companionships which had become essential to their enjoyment of almost anything. But a man may be very ordinary, both in his natural calibre and in the ammunition of his acquirements, and yet make a long shot because of some commanding height upon which circumstances have placed him.

—This was my case; though I must confess to having had some preliminary practice which was more like shooting from a ditch into a mud-bank. I had endeavored to secure a certain position—a very lowly one for a man with sheepskin credentials,—which, however, would bring me a temporary half-livable income, but perhaps serve as a fulcrum for something higher. I must begin somewhere. I bid for the situation with my best address. Indeed, with the pride of a recent graduate I thought I was doing a favor to the place by showing a willingness to accept it, using expensive flies to catch a bullhead. But after my most fascinating endeavor those to whom I applied turned me down in a manner that made me suspect that I was lacking in even ordinary ability. A man whom I had regarded as a blunderhead was selected in preference.

My zeppelin conceit was punctured; my self-confidence floundered. My ideals, my ambitions, so patiently and hopefully wrought for years, tumbled into the scrap-heap. If I could not get upon that lowest rung of the ladder why try to climb higher?

Only one who has felt it can appreciate the sense of humiliation and depression at my defeat.

Out of that "slough of despond" I was suddenly lifted, aerated and reinflated. I received an unexpected invitation from a distant city to accept a position the emolument from which was ten times as much as I had prospectively lost. The reputation I acquired by having been selected for this place gave me easy opportunities for advancing further, for "nothing succeeds like success."

Only in after years did I learn the secret of my good fortune. It had been due entirely to a friend whose kindly offices I did not know of until after his death. He was a man of great influence, upon whose judgment others depended, who had conceived for me what was almost a fatuous affection, and, "the wish being father to the thought," had imagined that I was possessed of an ability that I am sure I did not possess.

Not knowing his hand in the matter, I was perhaps unduly encouraged. Yet the stimulus came at a needed moment to counteract the self-depreciation occasioned by the failure of my previous attempt. I always think of the two experiences as providential counterparts,—the black and the white in the picture.

A letter from an old college chum, congratulating me on my good luck, contained a healthful suggestion which at the time I regarded as only a bit of pleasantry, but which, knowing as I did his candid habit of mind and his honest friendship for

me, led me to some very helpful thinking. Said my correspondent, "In the world's great banquet the dessert sometimes comes first; if so, it is apt to spoil one's relish for the less savory viands that follow." Poor fellow! He found it so. He was a brilliant man, at the time entering upon a very popular career, which was soon cut short by distressing circumstances that hastened the inroad of a fatal disease. On hearing of his death I reread his old letter. Perhaps in the ill-ordered menu of life I had begun with the sweets instead of the soup.

Notwithstanding my prosperity, I would frequently try to take stock of my real qualifications for my position. In sombre moments I was inclined to think that the gentlemen who had so unceremoniously rejected me in my first venture might have been wise. I often felt hypocritical in accepting the flatteries of success, and became distrustful of myself, not unlike a small boy who has climbed too high a tree, and knows that the branches are thin and brittle. If I could have done so I would gladly have climbed down to a lower limb; but responsibilities were continually boosting me in the other direction.

The consequence of this was, no doubt, helpful in a certain way. It put me upon my mettle. It toughened my energies. It drew into activity traits of mental character that in a less important position might have remained undeveloped. But, on the other hand, my ever-pressing duties allowed me no time to cultivate elements in my nature which

are more fundamental to character, and essential to one's deepest satisfaction and moral force. I felt like a mollusc growing more shell than inner substance. I was overtaxed to accomplish external things; out of breath in trying to keep up with myself.

I am convinced, after somewhat intimate acquaintance with prominent persons, that this experience is quite common. Many of our best men are making overdrafts, not only on their physical strength but on their mental ability also. They have not time to secure their "deposits" by quiet thinking, reading, and especially by the exercise of their more spiritual qualities. To gauge one's real abilities, and refuse the flattery of seeming opportunities; to maintain leisure to keep one's heart warm, and resist many calls of mere outward ambition;—this is a prime maxim for those who would make the most of life.

### *Other's Hands on Ours.*

Let me revert to my friend who thrust me so far up the ladder of success. My gratitude is not lessened by the conviction that either he lacked shrewdness in sizing me up, or his love for me tempted him to garnish the plain truth about me when talking to others.

How much we are indebted to the good will of other people for our prosperity! A friend who is disposed to make our interests his own will prove a real providence in human disguise. Syrian lads,

finding themselves mutually congenial, have a custom of making what they call Brotherhood in God, a vow of helpfulness which lasts through life. The compact may not be known to others, but where one goes the other follows with at least a wary eye and a ready hand. If one falls the other lifts. Is one prosperous, the other shares. Has one an enemy, he has also an invisible shield. Perhaps there is an allusion to this custom in the oriental proverb, "Two are better than one." I once heard a good sermon from "Make friends," the rest of the text, "of the mammon of unrighteousness," being left off.

In this I am not advocating the current habit of young men who are always looking for a "pull." Nobody will go far out of the way to pull you unless he has his own personal interest to serve, or unless he is deeply interested in you. In the former case he will be apt to drop you when you become too dependent on him, as a certain climber of the Matterhorn is accused of having cut the rope that tied his comrades to him when their weight or clumsiness endangered his own foothold.

Yet much of our social, business and professional life is determined by "pulls," as gravitation or affinities hold the world of things together. "Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not," was a piece of advice that the worldly-shrewd Solomon thought well to give to the young men of his day. We are reminded of the saying of Shakespeare: "We are born to do benefits. O what a

precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes!"

Two of my young friends were comrades in school. One aimed at business life; the other chose a professional career that necessitated a university course. Their boyish love for each other never flagged. An unformulated compact of mutual devotion held them when their paths diverged. The business lad shared his meagre earnings to pay the advanced school and college bills of his yoke-fellow. The other returned as unstintedly his encouragement and his after professional counsel. Knowing, as I do, the secret between them, it is a happy sight that of these two now silvered heads, the one a university president, the other the president of a flourishing corporation, hobnobbing by the fire-side.

A prominent merchant of considerable wealth one day asked me to select from my acquaintances a young man of good head and proved character who needed financial aid, proposing to set him up in business.

"I do this," said my friend, "in grateful remembrance of old Mr. ———," mentioning the name of a magnate of the street in the generation just past. "I was a poor boy clerking in a small grocery store. Mr. ———, who lived near by, was in the habit of giving me a kindly word when passing. One day he lectured me rather severely for standing so much of the time on the store stoop with my hands in my pockets. When I told him there was little to do

inside, he told me to use my brains and make business outside. I explained that I was not the proprietor of the shop and could do nothing. ‘Then start for yourself,’ said he. He forced upon me the loan of enough to buy several wagon-loads of potatoes that the farmers were bringing daily into town. ‘These potatoes,’ said he, ‘have eyes, and if you will look through them you may find a fortune for yourself.’ It was a small venture, unlike that of yesterday when I sold a hundred thousand bushels of wheat stored in my elevator down by the river; but without that first job I couldn’t have done the last one; and without Mr. ——’s kindly deed I would have done neither. Now I want to do something like that for some other young fellow. I think old Mr. ——’s ghost would like to see me do it if it ever comes back to haunt the market. I don’t know my man; so will let you select him.”

I picked out the lucky man, and with a result approximately similar to that which he had narrated.

I am very happy to record that on various occasions I have thus played the mutual friend to others who were not previously acquainted. There are several prosperous men in our land who, if they should read the above incident, might, except for the part played by the potatoes, think that I am referring to them. I have been the secret agent of a certain Broadway saint who used surreptitiously to keep students in the university, to make amends, as the benefactor said, for having himself neglected to

obtain an education. The beneficiary in this case never knew to whom he was indebted. Young men are not generally aware how much personal suggestion and endorsement by others must be credited with their advancement. Nor are they advertised of the older eyes that watch them lest we make a mistake in our recommendation. I repeat then, "make friends;" but be exceeding careful to merit the friendship.

I was once *particeps criminis* in bringing about a marriage. John and Mary had been engaged for many years; but there was a gulf that even Cupid's wings could not fly across. Mary had to keep house and care for an invalid mother. John scraped his knuckles to the bone in gathering enough to pay the interest on his farm mortgage. A summer neighbor said to me:

"That John and Mary business is getting on my nerves. It's a shame that such a devoted couple should live apart while their hair is getting gray. Let's fix them up!"

John's mortgage was taken care of by my friend in such a way that he need have no further solicitude about it. A plan was laid for the comfort of Mary's mother without her daughter's incessant attendance. Mary was induced to visit my friend at his city home. John was sent for in post-haste. He arrived with no suspicion of what was in the wind. An hour later the couple were confronted with a minister and two witnesses, and before they were fairly out of their bewilderment they were

man and wife. The surprise so took away John's breath that he forgot to kiss his bride after the ceremony.

I am now looking out from my window toward the "sunset and evening star." Around me lies an interminable stretch of dun and yellow hills, like much of my life, so filled with self-service that I don't care to remember it. Here and there out yonder are glowing splashes of autumnal tint, like Moses' bush that burned and was not consumed. The sunset glow sets them on fire. How they fascinate the eye! These remind me of the incidents of helpfulness in which I have had some little part. They are the brightest things in the whole landscape of recollection. They seem to belong to the land beyond the horizon.

### *My Mentor.*

One of the most helpful friends of those early days was a man who was commonly regarded as having himself made a colossal failure in life. That was, perhaps, true, if the dimensions of his failure were measured solely by the amount of material for success which he possessed at starting, but which he apparently builded only into a heap of débris.

My friend came of the most virile brain stock in America. One of his near relatives has honored his inheritance by gaining almost the biggest plume in our romance literature. Another was known seas-over as a philosopher, having as crystalline a mind as ever worked through the mud of metaphysics.

In this distinguished family my friend had himself been the "young hopeful."

He was an honor-man in college. He began his career as a preacher, but was too erratic for his fraternity, too abstruse in style for the crowd, and because of his eccentricities utterly misunderstandable by the community. Fortunately he married a fortune. Such persons ought to be born to wealth or else espouse it, otherwise they would starve.

He soon dropped all professional obligations,—or rather they dropped away from him. He retired to his Tusculum, read omnivorously and digested the pabulum of the world's thinking like an intellectual mastodon. He was a walking encyclopædia, and as keen and judicious a critic as I have ever known.

He used to visit me once a week. How I welcomed that big Gladstonian head and those Darwinian eyebrows as they thrust themselves into my library! He would throw himself unceremoniously into my biggest armchair, just for the sake of saving me the trouble of offering it to him. He would then pull up another chair for his feet, mop his big forehead—for he was always literally hot-headed even on zero days. Then he would open the sluiceway, and give me a reservoirful of what he had stored in his mind during the last seven days.

Perhaps he would throw a book upon my table. "I have brought you something worth knowing. It would take you a month to read all this stuff with all your other work. Don't try to. I will just give

you the gist of the matter in five minutes, if you don't interrupt me. I have turned down the leaves where you ought to read yourself. Chapter nine is splendid. Skip the next fifty pages. They are hash. I'll take the book next time I come. I want you as a youngster to get it while it is hot, and while people are talking about it. You know that we waste half our intellectual existence by postponing the mastery of subjects until we have more time. We never get any more time than we deliberately preëempt because of some necessity. Time is sucked out of the breast of eternity by the mouthful. There is never any to spare. As life goes on, unless paresis sets in, the more the brain finds it must do if it would keep its own respect. Leisure! Belts of calm where there is no sailing. When you strike leisure you had better sink. Most people do. What you acquire rapidly under the spell and spur of the high seas will serve you best."

Sometimes we would walk together like Mentor and Telemachus. Ah, those hours with my peripatetic philosopher! We went down the avenue, across the ferry, into the country. Neither a crowd nor a scene less interesting than a murder could jostle him off his centre when once fairly astride a theme.

"My boy," he would say, gripping my arm and my attention tightly, "my boy, be an independent thinker,—that is, after you have thoroughly read the best that other people have thought about a subject; but not before, or you will find yourself

like a bird trying to fly with one feather. Think about what the world is thinking about. You will find yourself as useless as a mole if you follow only your own head in choosing your way."

A medieval saint once said to another, "I put my soul within your soul." My friend was perhaps not of the kind to give love and life for another. His retirement from the work of the community showed that he was too self-absorbed for self-sacrifice. But he did put into my brain some fine scraps of his own scholarship, some rare bits of critical wisdom, many ideas always erudite though sometimes fantastic. He was at least a Platonic lover of my soul. That is all that Virgil was to Dante. If my friend took me down into some purgatorial depths of doubt he never left me there without at least his own bright interpretations of the curious shapes I saw among the shadows.

### *A Tumble and Rebound.*

For some years the sun shone brightly for me, and obeying the ancient maxim I hastened to make hay, and supposed that I had securely garnered it.

As I now review the years I find that the real mile-stones of life are not outward events, however exciting and important we may have regarded them at the time, but rather the inward experiences produced by these events—or more likely by minor happenings. I now judge those halcyon days, when the whole world seemed to revolve in time with my

pulse-beats, to have been less significant, and certainly less helpful, than darker times. The biggest stones don't go into steeples and minarets. In showy life there is no broadening and deepening of foundations.

So I found it. While a commanding position gave me a larger view of the world, and an ample arena drew out many energies that an humbler sphere of endeavor would not have developed, I now see that my personality was being narrowed. I suspected myself of harboring that meanest of all the parasites that nest themselves on a human soul, an aristocratic feeling. I began to look upon position as belonging to my natural rank. I can understand how princes come to think themselves as invested with some divine right; and how readily millionaires usurp the places of the "meek who shall inherit the earth." As my purse expanded my sympathies shrank. My honors so glared in my eyes that the haloes of better people were not so evident.

But Providence carries a whip for "the proud man's contumely " and the "insolence of office." An enterprise into which I had put my best talent (and my biggest conceit) suddenly toppled. I was made to realize that man's fortune is built on an earthquake belt, and that only souls with wings can securely rise from the demolition made by that titanic power known in Christendom as "the god of this world." I discovered that I must grow some new qualities of soul, some virtues that had in them

a levitating force, if I would escape the wreckage of life.

To this resolve my wife helped me. Her cheerfulness exorcised my vexation with myself and my wrath at others. Her smile at it all—back of which was her deeper intelligence of things—dissipated my disgruntableness, as the sun draws up the mists and fogs from off the marshes.

After about a year spent in contemplation of my ruins, lamenting the fallen columns and marred statuary, I metaphorically put the whole heap of it into the lime furnace, cleared the ground and began again. Taking account of my real stock—which is always inside and not outside one—I discovered that I had not been hurt at all. I discounted my own moral paper, charged things up honestly in the columns of profit and loss, pronounced myself to be decidedly solvent, and opened a new set of books—a system of double entry which I commend to all young men—namely, First, Myself in account with the World; second, Myself in account with Myself (including my wife, whom I retained as special partner in all matters of conscience and duty).

Now I can say with Rabbi Ben Ezra :

“What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me.”

My mishap had done nothing more than blow the shucks off the real corn. As I think of the petty pomposities and prides of life engendered by mere

outward prosperity, I am reminded of an orange tree that stood on my neighbor's front lawn. I wondered how it grew such luscious-looking fruit in our rigorous northern climate. A high wind disclosed the secret. After the blow had passed, the ground was littered with oranges, each one with a hairpin for its stem. Our showy estate is only something stuck on to us. It doesn't grow out of our very selves, and its loss really takes nothing from us. Adversities are God's stone-colored doves. They bring as many blessings as the white ones.

Near one of our homes was a great marsh. It was observed that the water bubbled up through the mud and rushes, instead of draining away in the ground. Wise men took the hint. The spot was converted into a reservoir, and for a generation supplied the town with sweet water. If I should ever be reincarnated with my present consciousness and memory, and set to live again on the earth, I should be inclined to invest in certain marsh-lands, that is, in disappointments with the bright bubbles in them as the best paying stocks. As I may not return, I cheerfully give the "points" to my younger friends.

## VIII

### MEN AND MEN

*“What is Man?”*

**H**OW quickly the most kindly human feeling can be turned into deadliest hate! When I began to write these reminiscences one-half of the civilized world was in as ferocious grapple with the other half as were ever two bulldogs. Yet, a few months since, we were burning the incense of our boasted new humanity in the temple of peace at the Hague. The brute in us is so untamed by our culture that at any moment in the flush of hot blood it will tear with its claws what it has been holding in the most velvety embrace. Lord Bryce can hardly be disputed when he declares that in native disposition we are unchanged from the men of the Stone Age.

A counterbalancing fact is that men may as suddenly drop their hatreds at the suggestion of mutual interest, if not at the touch of a higher Spirit (I intentionally capitalize the word Spirit) which is ready to invade humanity from without and above. To this conviction I was led by a series of incidents that greatly impressed me as I was starting in life.

In the winter immediately following the Civil

War I was a passenger on a small steamer going down the Potomac. A sudden cold snap had blocked the river with ice. As we could not go forward it was necessary to keep the boat in a constant side-swinging motion, else we should be held fast in the rapidly freezing water. The passengers were arranged in a long line, and rushed quickly back and forth across the deck to keep the craft rocking. General ——, a noted Union officer, commanded at one end, while the redoubtable Ex-Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston, who had recently given his sword to Sherman, played corporal at the other. Johnston, the rebel, would cry, "Forward, boys, for the Union!" as we dashed to starboard. "About face! Now for a regular Pickett's charge at Gettysburg!" shouted the Union officer as we rushed to port. A jollier or more congenial crowd never met. After all, I thought, the man in us is bigger than the brute in us. It will leap as quickly, and, being more persistent, will dominate in the end. That conviction is abundantly confirmed now, as I recall the four years of the Civil War and the half century of peace that has followed.

The next Sunday after this episode I worshipped in the old Presbyterian Church of Richmond. The edifice was as sad a reminder as any shot-torn battle-flag. The walls were stained with many a leak. Patches of plaster were pendant like the scabs of already healed wounds. The floor was uncarpeted; the pews uncushioned and broken, re-

calling the fact that for years they had been used for hospital beds for thousands of wounded men. Hymn-books and Bibles were torn and coverless, suggesting the wadding used at the battle of Springfield in the Revolution, where brave old Dominie Caldwell led his congregation on to fight with his famous "Give them Watts, boys!" Some of the leading men of Richmond were arrayed in "butter-nut" cloaks, made of old army blankets by cutting slits for the heads and arms.

The pastor, Dr. Moses D. Hoge, a man who had lost none of the respect of the North by his fidelity to his Southern flock, was in the pulpit. At the close of his sermon he made an appeal for the repair of the edifice. My Northern companion on the trip, who for four years had been as good a hater of the Confederacy as any man with "blood in his eye," emptied his pocketbook into the collection-box, and accompanied his donation with an additional pledge written on a blank leaf of a letter he had in his pocket. I never worshipped God with more heartiness, as, without a word of bitterness or complaint for the Lost Cause, the preacher led our devotions in a prayer to the Prince of Peace. The new loyalty—that of man to man—had already conquered the hated war-spirit, and I thought only of Him whose "banner over us is love."

After service, although we were strangers to every one, we were most cordially greeted. With old-fashioned hospitality several of our gray-cloaked fellow-worshippers accompanied us to our

hotel. The following day we could not refuse an invitation to dine with one of our new-found friends. The white silver gleamed from the mirror-like mahogany as in Colonial Days. But my chair was rickety, and the walls of the room were covered with sadly faded paper, relieved only by some family portraits and a couple of Confederate flags that supported the mantel.

I shall never forget my thoughts—or, rather, my impressions, for I could not think distinctly—as the next day I sat for an hour in the ruins of the Confederate “Fort Hell” at Petersburg, while my companion was similarly musing, fifty paces away in what remained of the Union “Fort Damnation.” On comparing notes afterward we found that our themes were identical,—“What sort of a creature is man anyhow?”

That question hooked itself into me with a barbed point as later I watched the masses of black humanity, half-clothed or entirely naked, sunning the shivers out of their flesh like so many pigs in mire, on the banks of the James.

What is man? That black lump curled around a hawser-post on the dock is a man. So he is only a man who stands yonder, his face almost tragic with the intensity of his love, his eyes deep-set as if intent on penetrating to the heart of the problem that lay wrapped in that black skin of the slumbering hulk at which he was gazing. Armstrong planning Hampton was only a man. While in after years addressing audiences at Hampton or Tuskegee my

mind has seemed to stand still, fascinated by that old memory: Armstrong and the other man!

So now, with my intelligence almost stunned with the problem of the warring nations, I cannot drop my faith that the sense of fraternity will ultimately conquer the hates of mankind. The divine in man is greater than the beast, although it may take deep cuttings to reveal the hearts of men to themselves.

### *Men Misunderstood.*

An early residence was at the capital of our State. Among our familiar neighbors was the household of the Governor. He was one of the deepest-brained politicians of his day. Like many men of his craft he was noted for his self-control. His face, to one who would try to read his thoughts, was as immobile as an iron mask. He was an ardent partisan, but his voice never vibrated with the intensity of passion except when making a public address. He was a sort of political Enceladus, who lay quietly under the mountain until it pleased him to shake himself, set the earth quaking and the lava running.

The Governor one day showed me the draft of a proclamation of Thanksgiving he was about to issue for the fall of Richmond. But his manner evinced no more trace of jubilation than did that of a pro-Southern minister who on the subsequent Sunday had to read it to his congregation. A few weeks later I was awakened before dawn by a summons to the Executive Mansion. The Governor sat in the

main hallway wringing his hands in uncontrollable grief. His face was tear-stained, and marred by a night-long anguish. Seizing my hand he cried like a lost child:

“Oh, the horror of it! They have killed our President! They have struck down Abraham Lincoln! Abraham Lincoln!”

The Governor's wife and a few intimate friends tried in vain to quiet him. In that inner circle there was revealed another man than I had suspected to be in him. He was after all one of deepest sensibilities, tenderest sympathies and passionate love. His affection for his Great Chief was tragic, sacrificial, self-immolating.

But a startling change came over the Governor. Prominent citizens began to pour in. Instantly the iron mask was again on his features. His voice was steadied and emotionless. Turning to his private secretary he said in a business tone:

“Countermand the Thanksgiving Proclamation. Prepare one appointing a Day of Humiliation and Prayer.”

To his Adjutant, “Better leave the protection of this house and the public property to the regular police. Soldiers about it might alarm the people.”

To the crowd swarming in, “Yes, gentlemen, the news is very sad; but there is no need of any excited feeling. Please go home and quiet your neighborhoods.”

Some one in the crowd passing out remarked, “The Governor is a man of no feeling. Such a

day! And he is as cool as an iceberg. No doubt scheming his advancement to a job higher even through this awful calamity."

I that day learned a lesson that has been of great value to me through life; namely, not to gauge men's characters and dispositions by their formal actions. Remembering this, I have made many most trustworthy friends of those whom others distrust.

I once lived in the neighborhood of the man who was called the Warwick of American politics. He was the Boss before that word had acquired its ugly commercial taint. Governors, Senators, Assemblymen and contractors were supposed to live by him. The raising of his finger was as potent a signal for the triumph or sacrifice of a political aspirant as was the "Thumb up" or the "Thumb down" of the Roman Emperor at the arena. If vivisection had revealed a bit of steel mechanism in the place where his heart was supposed to be, it would have confirmed the opinion of his enemies.

Being, as I was, not a political adventurer, but only an ordinary neighbor, I discovered in this man almost a womanly tenderness. I had frequent occasion to act as his almoner where he would not have his charities known, lest they might be thought to smack of some political intent. He was patient, like Job, to seek out the causes he understood not, that his benisons might not be bestowed unworthily. If his political position made him domineering, his recreation was kindness. My choice picture of this

adamantine man is one photographed on my memory by the light of his own genial face, as he one day held the hand of my little child during a walk, and entertained him with grandfatherly prattle, while would-be political magnates made their fawning obeisance as he passed.

I was once reminded of this man as I watched General Sherman, the hell-maker in Georgia. He was in Tiffany's store in New York and lifted in his arms a tiny girl that she might see the glories that sparkled in the cases below. The old warrior was as gleeful as the child.

Judge I—— asked me to be with him one morning in court. He had to pronounce sentence of death on a horrible murderer. Crowds in the street were waiting to cheer the awful words when it would be announced to them that the villain was judiciously started on his way to perdition. The Judge was noted as one of the most remorseless defenders of justice. On the bench he was as “cool as a hangman.” After the sentence he retired to his anteroom, and, quivering with an emotion no sign of which had been shown on the bench, he said to me, “I wanted you to be with me to-day as a friend. There are some things too solemn for a man to do alone. It had to be done; but I would rather have given my finger to the flames than have uttered those words, ‘Hanged by the neck until dead.’ I shall not sleep for a week.”

In my directory of élite souls I have the names of a number whom I call my “good hypocrites”;

men and women who hide their virtues as others hide their vices. Indeed, I believe in the subcutaneous kindness of most people. If "beauty is only skin deep," so is ugliness. Those from whom we expect the least may give us most. Simonides' warning about the ill-armed knight at the tournament is often timely:

"Opinion's but a fool who makes us scan  
The outward habit for the inner man."

While I am in an old man's garrulous mood let me parenthesize an incident or two, for my memory is as full of them as the old chestnut tree out yonder is full of burrs with the mahogany nuts inside of them.

Mr. C——, the head of a large mercantile business, was a stern disciplinarian. His heavy eyebrows and flashing black eyes were the terror of any delinquent in his employ. He once informed me that some one in his office, he could not tell who, was dishonest. He was advised to engage a detective, and ferret out the culprit. After a few days the police agent announced that he was near to the offender; another day would have him in the toils. The employer said to me, "I propose to dismiss the detective. I will pursue the matter alone from this point."

On my expressing surprise he said, "I am unwilling that a mere police agent, who presumably has no human interest in the case, should know the guilty party. Maybe he is some young fellow who

is in his first temptation. A stranger's knowledge of his guilt might ruin him ; it might be a blackmail club in future years. But if I find him out by myself, I may be able to help him. Who knows?"

Mr. C—— himself took up the clues, and succeeded. He never revealed the personality of the offender to me. "Just to think of it!" he exclaimed. "One of my boys—my office boys! Why, I love those fellows as if they were my own children. I have taught them the business. I would have promoted this very man."

He sent for the culprit. When charged with his guilt, the man made frank and full confession ; then bowed his head on the desk and moaned, "Oh, my wife! My wife!"

Mr. C—— assured him that so far his crime was known only to himself and God, and that there was no need that even his wife should ever know of it. He accompanied the young man to his home that night, fearing, as he told me, that the tragedy in his soul might find some expression in his manner. He afterward became their frequent visitor. He learned incidentally that the wife supposed that their income was much larger than it really was, and had not practiced economy. When she discovered the exact size of the family purse she showed a marvellous skill in domestic science, and made both ends meet without the loss of a crumb of comfort.

When I expressed to Mr. C—— my amazement at his method of dealing with the case, he bent upon

me those Sinaitic eyebrows as he said, "You and I are Christians; and isn't that the way the Great Master has dealt with us sinners? He finds us out, and lays the charge of sin right before our conscience, but, at the same time, He shields us. Why, even God Himself doesn't know—that is, He *forgets*—our iniquities."

Yet Mr. C—— was generally regarded as an almost harshly just man; one who had only withering scorn for every sort of iniquity; true salt of the earth, but with overmuch of pungency in it; a light of the world, no doubt, but with the heat element in the flame somewhat exaggerated. How wrong that estimate!

*Reputations Often Mislabeled.*

I have found the same mistake in the popular judgment of men of great benevolence, who have been thought to be close and selfish. In collecting a fund for a certain charity I was warned not to waste time with Mr. D——, so I passed him by in my solicitations. But the gentleman himself called upon me, and without so much as the mildest hint on my part volunteered the largest sum in the entire contribution.

"Andy W—— is as close as a wrapped mummy, but the shrewdest stock speculator we have," was the way my friend Z spoke of him. One day I was sitting in the latter's office when Andy came in.

"Say, Z, I want you to go into this copper deal with me."

"All right, Andy. But just what is your game?"

"Only this," replied the hard-hearted man; "you know they want a new wing to the hospital. If we lose on this spec. we will say nothing about it. But if we win, we will give one-half of the swag to the hospital. What do you say?"

Z said nothing.

"They said" that Mr. R—— had the habit of picking up pins. His vest-ends were full of them. That he shaved his new-born chickens for the sake of their down. But many a time he has talked to me like this:—"You, ——, know more about local charities than I do. Here's a ten (or, perhaps, it was a twenty or a fifty). Some pickpocket must have left it there in my pocket when trying to rob me. Just drop it where it will do the most good. No! No! No accounting for it, or I won't give you any more."

Mr. X had built quite a palatial residence. A chronic complainer pointed it out with some remark about the lazy rich. I was glad to reply, "You know it was X who stayed all night with poor W——, when he died down at the police station where they took him after the accident."

The conversation changed.

"As people say," said a neighbor, "Mr. L—— is hard-fisted. I once tried to get the better of him in a deal, but he skin-flinted me. Yet when I was in hot water, and the financial hair scalded off me, L—— offered to loan me \$10,000 without security."

I wish my memory would catch only such inci-

dents; but unfortunately it hooks onto some unsavory fish.

The Hon. ——— was president of a huge corporation which employed thousands of men in the lowland marshy suburbs of one of our cities. The distress of these workmen, most of whom received the lowest wages while the company was boasting of its dividends, was so terrible as to excite the pity of the entire community. As chairman of a certain benevolent commission it became my duty to correspond with the magnate. He replied to me most graciously and patronizingly. He even cited the parable of the Good Samaritan to show the high Christian motives which inspired him. It was a great comfort for him to think that he had always taken care of his needy neighbors. No one whom he knew was ever turned away from his door. But those people whom I had referred to, he said, were not his neighbors. He didn't know one of them. His home was not in those suburban swamps. Thank God! He lived among the delightful hills of ——— County. Wouldn't I come up and see him?

This man's idea of neighborly duty was that it was limited to his porter at the lodge, his guests, and a handful of wistful-eyed children who wished him a Merry Christmas. The thousands who toiled for him in the reeks and damps, whose lives were held by him as truly as if in rural savagery he grasped their scalp-locks, who fattened him with their blood,—these were not his neighbors!

I did not go to visit him. I am sure that his delicious viands would have choked me.

But another incident in this same collection campaign took away the bad taste left in my mouth by this man's invitation.

A day or two later I was strangely moved to call upon Mr. J——. I knew of no special appeal that my pet charity could make to him except the far-fetched one that its work was done in the State where he resided. But those who would collect for charity soon learn that they must thrash all waters, and let their line drift into all sorts of unpromising holes.

"That's so," said Mr. J——, when I broached the subject. "That's so; we must stand together in these matters. There are so few of us who appreciate the want about us that unless we act there will be awful suffering this winter. I thank you for calling to tell me how I might help. Sorry that I have so little. If this check for five thousand will be of service you may take it; but only on one condition, namely, that you will be just as frank with me in letting me know of future need in the same direction."

Such men as this latter are the real support of almost all our public charities.

Yet some dribbles come from other hands. My friend, Professor ——, was out soliciting for an endowment fund of some sort which was needed in his university. He was directed to Mr. ——, say Jones of Cedar Street. "You will find him some-

what eccentric, but very liberal, and especially fond of your college, I think."

The following day the Professor returned. "Eccentric! I should say so. I couldn't get a polite word out of him."

"Try him again," was the advice. "Perhaps he is only testing your patience to see what sort of a beggar you are."

The Professor made another attack, determined to be persistent. He succeeded. "There," said he, "that's fine!" throwing a check for a thousand on the table. "But I'd as soon pick the teeth of a snapping-turtle as to tackle such a job again. Eccentric! Why, he is the most blasphemous man I've ever run up against."

"Impossible! Impossible, my friend! Mr. Jones is the chairman of our Y. M. C. A. devotional committee. Let me look at that check. 'Simon C. Jones!' You've got on to the wrong man. You've struck that diamond dealer in Cedar Street. A thousand dollars from him for a Christian University! Oh, yes, we will tell that in Gath. How did you do it?"

"Why, I remembered what you said about his being peculiar, but all right in heart. So I just sat there until he thawed out. After a while he scowled at me. 'Take that, and go to —— with your college.' I took it, but didn't go where he directed me. I came to you. Can't you add a five hundred? I'll sit it out with you even if you swear at me."

*Obstinacy or Wide-eyedness?*

I early found in my intellectual make-up, or in my chronic disposition, something that would probably prevent my ever being very popular. While I always tried not to be disagreeable to others I made no effort to agree with them in their opinions. Indeed, the fact that "everybody was saying so" made me shut my mouth, unless I opened it in questioning the common notion.

Possibly this was somewhat due to stubbornness, but I may be pardoned if I pass a less harsh judgment upon myself. I was given to halting my opinion upon almost any subject until the other side was heard from, and, if there were no other side in immediate evidence, to tentatively make one. Thus I tried to test the strength of a proposition, as they do a force in physics, by the amount of resistance it can overcome.

Now, if one aims to be a mere philosopher, taking no part in passing human affairs, but only studying them as an astronomer watches the stars, this habit of mind might be commended. It is certainly interesting. But it will not do for one who must make his way with the throng, and who needs the help of popular momentum to reach his destination. It will be especially disastrous to any one who covets present leadership among his fellows. That requires that he "keep his ear to the ground" to detect the way the host may be tramping; an exploit that I fear my ears are not long enough to accomplish.

I maintain, however, that the attitude of judiciously—that means slowly—inspecting all propositions from both front and rear is the duty of educated men who aspire to be most helpful in the long run to the community, the school, the sect or the party to which they belong. It makes the difference between a statesman and a mere politician, a thinker and an advocate, a scholar and a dogmatizer, a true preacher and a babbler of “smooth things,” a prophet and a time-server; although one who adopts the better rôle should make up his mind to wait patiently for only posthumous recognition.

I was not a trimmer; for I was never on both sides at once. A friend who proved his friendship by giving me “faithful wounds” perhaps came nearer the truth when in a nettled mood he said I was mulish; for one never knows how much of his quadrupedal ancestral stuff may still be uneliminated from his spinal marrow.

My early grubbing through the history of philosophy, of science, of religion with its multitudinous parasites, and of whatever pertains to the growth of the thought-weed in the human brain, made me suspicious of popular notions whether they attained the dignity of creeds or were only fads. “Vox Populi” has often been a landslide stopped or diverted too late by the rock-rib of “sober second thoughts” among the wise. When I was a wee tot I deliberately broke one of our family heirlooms; and, since “the child is father of the man,” I must have inherited an iconoclastic bent

to smash what Bacon called Idols of the Tribe, the Den, the Forum and the Theatre.

I lived in an Abolitionist community, and was well cudgelled for my lack of humanity in maintaining that John Brown was not more than forty-nine per cent. right in making the Harper's Ferry raid upon the peaceful citizens of Virginia.

I was not a Democrat, but won the local reputation of being a Copperhead by suggesting that McClellan should be credited with the victory of Antietam.

I could not have been elected a pound-keeper after having publicly expressed an opinion that the Carpetbaggers in the South were really carrying political and social dynamite instead of copies of Magna Charta for distribution among the Blacks.

While Garfield was lying mortally wounded at Elberon I attended an indignation meeting called to damn the name of the assassin Guiteau. The fire of popular wrath as it found vent from the mouths of several speakers was insanely diverted into a lava stream of curses for the New York Senators who opposed Garfield's purpose to keep all patronage in the hands of the Executive. Then, as the fury of the people waxed hotter and hotter, as that of coals when closely packed, the tide of vengeful oratory was headed for Vice-President Arthur, who in the event of the death of the martyr would become our Chief Executive. When I was called upon for a speech I protested against this personal cruelty to Mr. Arthur, and suggested the unfairness

and danger of thus creating a popular prejudice adverse to the administration of an untried man who would need and should have the confidence and support of the nation until he himself should forfeit it by unwise action. I was hissed by some in the crowd.

In these special cases subsequent events showed that I was at least an infant in the family of which it is said "wisdom is justified of its children." But there were other matters regarding which judgment may still be suspended as to whether my stand was mere obstinacy or, like Balaam's ass, I may have really seen an angel in the way.

I have no doubt that this habit of "watchful waiting" until one sees the real drift of facts before taking a public stand may be carried too far. There are issues in which we must act without full information, or we will not act at all. A bad crop is better than the sterility of an unsown field. Napoleon would drive against the enemy, and correct a dozen blunders of judgment while *en route*. There may be in movements for reform too much "Safety First," as in Holland they make a guardsmen walk deliberately ahead of all trains passing through the villages.

But I remind myself of the fact that I am writing neither a history nor a philosophy; only the gossip of a soul trying to understand itself and its varying moods that have been engendered by the pricking of outward happenings. For my own good I have been, perhaps, too slow in forming my judg-

ments; have tried to be too "wide-eyed," to borrow one of Carlyle's expressions, and attempted to see around corners, often in roads that I was not called to go. But I could not help it. I needed "blinders" to force me to see only straight ahead, and not shy at shadows of things that came in from the side.

A comrade in the Adirondacks complained of the guide who was building the dinner fire with nothing but brambles. He went off to seek better wood. When he returned with a goodly load the dinner had been cooked—and eaten! Metaphorically I have sometimes been that man.

## IX

### SOME MYSTERIES

#### *A Cloud Over the House.*

FOR some years our home had known of sorrow only as the youthful Buddha knew it, interpreting the wild music of the wind-touched silver strings stretched across the gourd on the window-sill,—

. . . “We make no mirth,  
So many woes we see in many lands,  
So many streaming eyes and wringing hands.”

But at length the inevitable entered our door. Death claimed our eldest boy, a bright lad of thirteen.

As the case attracted the attention of medical scientists at the time, I may relate some particulars regarding it.

For many weeks the lad passed through the various phases of what was diagnosed to be meningitis down to what seemed to all at the moment to be the fatal end. Then, strangely, from the very brink he came back to apparent health, except in one sad respect,—he was totally blind. Some mysterious assault of the terrible disease had destroyed the vitality of the optic nerve.

But the loss of outward sight was partly compensated by a marvellous quickening of his mental faculties. He especially astonished all by his feats of memory, although before his sickness he had been the ordinary plodding schoolboy. So vividly did he recall places and things that he had little need for what he called his "long eye"—a cane which he carried to prevent his striking against obstacles. His sense of direction was as keen as that discovered in the homing instinct of birds and other animals. Whatever from earliest childhood had made the slightest impression upon him was reproduced with the accuracy of the phonographic disk. A poem of some length which he had heard but once, and that seven years before as a larger scholar had declaimed it, was repeated without the loss of a word, and with mimicry of the intonation and emphasis of the original speaker. Abstract arguments which would have been utterly unappreciated before his affliction, and, indeed, which I myself could follow only with closest attention, elicited from him the shrewdest criticism. At one leap he had mentally covered the distance between childhood and manhood.

The phenomenon attracted the attention of experts. One of the most distinguished of these ascribed it to the abnormal increase of the temperature of the brain. This opinion was based upon large observation of similar cases, and opened a large field for speculation. May genius be measured by the thermometer? Edison has said that his re-

markable inventions were not the result of inspiration, but rather of perspiration. Did he refer to brain-sweats as well as to industry in research? Mahomet we know was a little hot-headed. So were Bonaparte and Byron. Shakespeare's brain must then have had a fever furnace at its base to have produced such a variety of intellectual values. Alienists have noted different degrees of heat among the different phrenological bumps of their patients. May this account for certain great musicians, artists, poets, inventors, who in respects other than that of their one peculiar talent were positively lacking in mental force and ordinary moral balance?

As I watched my boy, walked with him as almost my equal—for I could lead him only with my physical, not with my mental, eye—I felt that we most commonplace people are lodged on the brink of the preternatural, and that a very little thing may tip us over into it. Hence clairvoyance, mediumistic powers, and possibly that far gaze that we attribute, not knowing what else to call it, to inspiration.

After some months of life within the Border Land our child passed beyond, and was lost to our sight in the glow of the Great Horizon. Several days before his death he was in apparent comatose condition. He was deaf to all sounds, blind to all signs, and scarcely responsive to touch. Only the throbbing pulse and the heaving breast indicated life.

One of the attendant physicians was given to

materialistic speculation. He and I were quite intimate, and spoke together in utmost frankness, so that there was nothing obtrusive in our conversation even at the bedside of the patient.

“Your boy is now practically dead,” said he. “At least life is at its lowest possible ebb. The physical exhaustion has destroyed consciousness. Heart-beats now mean no more than the growth of the hair after death. Nothing vital remains to him; only the mechanism, or perhaps the chemistry, of the body is still active. Pardon my question; but you and I have so often discussed this subject that I will ask it;—can you believe that when the last drop of the physical current has ebbed away he will resume consciousness? You may be right in believing that after death God will revive the soul. But you see, speaking scientifically, that it must be revivification, and not continuance of life.”

The physician had scarcely gone when something occurred that gave a better answer to his query than I could have invented.

The child’s lips moved. His mother’s ear caught the faintest whisper—“What day?”

It seemed a mere illusion; but the words were repeated distinctly. Life physical was undoubtedly at its lowest ebb, but the soul was alert. In the long dark, soundless, feelingless interval of time he had had no means of keeping count of the days. Neither dawn nor nightfall, neither morning salutation nor good-night kiss, no sensation of a hand smoothing his brow nor the taste of water on his

lips, had helped him mark the passing time. Yet he knew that it had passed; and while we were discussing his unconscious state his mind had been in highest consciousness, watching for some chance opening of the shutters of the senses to communicate with us.

How could we answer his question? He could not hear, nor see, nor was his body responsive to the prick of a needle. While we were pondering, his mother happened to press quickly a spot on the inside of his hand. The faintest smile came to his face. There was no discernible movement of his features, only a soft light seemed to shine through them from within. I cannot describe it; it was as if the soul were pure light and had briefly returned and looked out upon us from his face.

He repeated the question, "What day?" and as his mother pressed his hand he said slowly, taking time to recover strength after each syllable:

"One—Yes—Two—No."

What could he mean? Mother's quick intuition solved the problem. He wished her to signal in to him through pressures of the hand.

"What day? Monday?"

Two strokes—"No! Tuesday?"

Two strokes—"No! Wednesday?"

Two strokes—"No! Thursday?"

Two strokes—"No! Friday?"

Two strokes—"No! Saturday?"

One stroke—"Saturday! New Year Day! Happy New Year!"

The child lingered on the Border Land another day, making no sign except at the very last when the lips were laden with the inherent courtesy of his spirit, and he whispered the word "Thanks!" Then he fled away.

How often I have pondered the thought "Physical life at the lowest ebb, but spirit life at the flood!" Was it not so? The boy, in his blindness and deafness and almost total lack of sensation, realized that he was shut in from all communication with the outer world as truly as was ever a prisoner within the thick walls of his dungeon. He discovered, however, that there was one tiny outlet not entirely closed,—that sensitiveness of his hand,—and watched it. He invented an alphabetic code as truly as Morse did—and invention is said to be the highest act of our mental faculties. He signalled his queries, and got his answers. His brave, loving heart sent out its warm farewell as the sunset's glow now comes through the opening in yonder window blind.

"Physical life lowest; mental life highest!" And when that tiny avenue of touch was closed all life vanished? I do not believe it.

Yet I am aware that the case is not conclusive. If I were disposed to rank materialism, and especially if I had written a book on the subject and was driven by the pride of being consistent, I could raise some debatable questions. But not being a materialist I gladly turn my eyes toward the light that fills yonder Horizon, in which I last saw my child,

and can almost see a bright smiling face that bids me be patient for a little while.

I told Dr. ——— what we had seen. He stood a moment as if incredulous, then sat down with his head on his hands in deep thought. “I imagined that I knew something about the relation of soul and body after a half century of reading, watching, thinking about it,” said he. “But I don’t. Body lowest; mind highest! No, I give it up.”

### *Occult Suggestions.*

During our boy’s illness we had not diagnosed the trouble as due to a tumor. The majority of the consulting physicians, as I have said, regarded the case as one of limited meningitis, which produced a suffusion of matter at the base of the brain sufficient to account for all the symptoms, even the blindness following the destruction of the optic nerve. In this they were mistaken, as an autopsy revealed a tumor, excited by a blow of which at the time we had not known.

An incident occurred during his sickness that produced much speculation. One day, after a period of comparative comfort during which he had gone about with me, he complained of a strange numbness in the feet. Dr. ——— advised a return to iodide of potassium three times a day, to produce the absorption of any remaining foreign matter.

In some way our conversation drifted to the subject of clairvoyance. In another part of the

city was a physician who was reputed to be gifted with "second sight." The doctor proposed to test this man's ability by referring to him my boy's case. "If he has clairvoyant power he can tell us what's the matter. But I think we will find him a humbug, though he is said to be a highly educated man and a very respectable citizen. But as he knows neither of us it will be a good chance to test him. Come!"

On our way to the expert's residence Dr. ——— and I went over the prominent symptoms of the lad's malady: Numbness in feet. Heart, lungs, stomach all right organically, but something preying on the pneumo-gastric nerve that connects them. Total blindness. About two-fifths deaf, etc., etc.

On entering the clairvoyant's room, we made no introduction of ourselves by name, Dr. ——— only stating that we were interested in a case that was somewhat mysterious.

Instantly the clairvoyant dropped into a chair, and began in a dreamy tone:

"Very mysterious! I can't see him. Ah, a lad! Numb in his feet; a new symptom.—Limbs all right.—Intestines, stomach, heart, lungs all sound; but something disturbing the pneumo-gastric nerve.—Oh! and blind. Can't see a ray of light.—And two-fifths deaf. Limited meningitis base of brain. Five drops of iodide of potassium three times a day."

"Tumor?" suggested Dr. ———.

"No tumor; meningitis."

We came away convinced that if in this man's case there was no clairvoyant power, he did possess a remarkable telepathic ability, and read the thoughts of those inquiring of him.

Dr. ——— determined to make further investigations. He sent his office-boy to the expert in occult things, giving the messenger a few symptoms of a purely imaginary case. The boy returned wildly excited.

"Why, Doctor, the man didn't wait for me to speak, but told me that I had all the things you said your patient had."

"What else?"

"Nothing."

The clairvoyant had evidently read the messenger's mind, but knew nothing of the case.

During the following year I made the personal acquaintance of the clairvoyant, meeting him in one of our city charities, for he gave liberally of his gains whether well- or ill-gotten. I told him of the accuracy with which he had read our thoughts, and also of the way in which he followed them even when they went far astray from the real facts in the case. He was not at all disturbed or hurt by what I said; but quietly told me his history.

He was a Harvard graduate, and held diplomas from our best medical schools. Early in his practice he had observed that when a patient entered his office he seemed to have an intuitive knowledge of the person's ailment, which subsequent examina-

tion confirmed. He acquired the habit of dropping external diagnosis and prescribing from his impressions. "I now believe," he confessed, "that I have no clairvoyant power; I am the telepathic victim of any and everybody that visits me. I can't help thinking their thoughts about themselves. Generally we are both right. That accounts for my rather extensive reputation as a wonder-maker. People like to be told on apparent authority what they already believe. On the whole I guess I do more good than harm; for people are apt to know what ails them. Besides, I give no medicines beyond a few simple old-housewives' remedies. With a little cheering up they are still, in spite of the advance of medical science, about the best."

### *Telepathic Suggestions.*

This is not the only book I have written. The mention of telepathy reminds me of the first brain chick that a publisher's incubator hatched out for me, and set cackling among the flock of other creatures of the quill.

Shortly after the book's appearance I was traveling in a railroad train on the Pacific coast. Two ladies, total strangers to me, seemed to be curiously interested in my appearance. I adjusted my neck-tie, examined my cap, and had the assurance of my wife that I was in good order. But the ladies were evidently not agreed between themselves as to something about my personality. This much I sur-

mised from their debate and their glances in my direction.

Several weeks later, on registering my name at the Stoneman House in the Yosemite, I was greeted by an exclamation of a sort of satisfied surprise just behind me. Turning I confronted the strange ladies. They apologized for their intrusion, and then gave me a problem to solve. One of them had read my book, and, although she had no conception of my personal appearance, was strangely convinced that I was the author of it. Her companion twitted her on the dangerous habit of seeing ghosts. The opportunity of seeing the name I should write on the hotel record was too much for the curiosity of both.

The acquaintance thus oddly formed has continued for many years. None of us can understand the matter, although I think we have all profited by the courtesies it suggested, although we live three thousand miles apart. But I cannot understand how thoughts held long in solution, as literary invention requires, would ultimately ooze through the skin and leave their telltale marks on one's countenance.

A week later I was walking on the street in Seattle pondering this very strange occurrence. I stopped a moment to glance over the periodicals in a bookstore window. The proprietor, having caught a glimpse of me, ran to the back of his shop and brought a book, saying, "Mister, I think you will like to read this." It was my "chicken come

home to roost." As I glanced at the volume, I must have shown in my manner a perplexity which the man mistook for displeasure, for he instantly apologized. He declared that he had never done so rude a thing before, but that on seeing me he was seized with a sudden impulse to act as he had acted. He begged me not to be offended. I then told him that, having sufficiently worried myself in writing the stuff, I had no inclination to read it. The storekeeper dropped upon a stool, and stammered out,—"'Pon my word, Mister, I never offered that book or any other book to anybody who didn't ask for it, although I have been in this business for twenty years. Ain't it strange?"

I don't know if he has ever solved the mystery; I have not.

A few days after, I told the incident to a little group of friends whom I found on board the steamer going to Alaska. One of the party professed some knowledge of the telepathic process. He insisted that if a number of persons would think simultaneously and intensely upon a given subject, a hint of that subject would be conveyed without word or outward sign to others. We agreed to try the experiment. Our party consisted of a lawyer, a clergyman, a banker and a mining engineer. We summoned a jury from a number of our fellow-passengers who were as yet unknown to us. One after another of us four was to stand up, while the other three would think hard of who and what he was. I doubt if there was ever before

such team-work in the effort to drive a thought into others' minds. Result:—The clergyman, who wore a rough storm-coat, was selected by the jury for the mining engineer; while the lawyer, being especially well-groomed, was taken for the banker. We agreed—myself being the only dissenter—that telepathy was a humbug.

I imagine that my great-grandchildren will know more of this subject than their forebears, and I narrate the incidents as possible way-marks on the road of psychic discovery.

### *Literary Assimilation.*

As akin to this subject of occult suggestion I will give another incident. I was in the back office of a publisher when several reviewers and critics were discussing two books that had recently appeared and which in substance, rhetorical style and in some details were very similar. Plagiarism was hinted at. The editor of one of our foremost magazines, who had spent many years in reading and deciding upon the merits of manuscripts, objected to that inference. He stated that on many occasions he had found upon his table duplicates, and once or twice triplicates, of the same story or essay, which had been written by persons who were total strangers to one another, and who from their remote residences in various parts of the world could have had no knowledge of what the *alter ego* had written. These articles, he said, were generally on some new and peculiar line, suggesting that the

brains responsible for them had broken out in strange spots.

His explanation was, in his own verbiage, "Unconscious Cerebral Assimilation." This explanation needs itself to be explained. Is there a sort of Time-Spirit over, around, within us, that prompts minds similarly constituted to follow the same paths of thought? Are we altogether free agents in literary composition? When we invoke our Muse does she sometimes dictate to us from a page which she has used in helping other votaries out of their intellectual sterility?

I recall a tragic result of this spirit-intermeddling with human affairs. An American scholar of my acquaintance had spent many years over the subject of Antichrist. He concluded that the Roman Empire most nearly filled out the description of that ill-savored personage contained in the cartoon predictions of Scripture. To confirm his conclusion he mastered the politics of the Empire, the biographies and policies of the various emperors, and spent a moderate fortune over squeezes from monuments, coins, etc. He read to a confidential circle chapters of his forthcoming book. As he was about to send the manuscript to print there appeared Renan's Antichrist. The learned Frenchman had covered with detailed exactness the same ground, citing the same facts and drawing the same inferences. The world reputation of Renan forbade my friend contesting the rewards of authorship.

It is said that the waves of ether which convey the Marconigrams radiate in all directions from a common centre, and could be interpreted by persons far away on any side, if only they had the key, or the instrument to measure the dimension of the wave. Does a new thought or series of thoughts, agitating our minds, similarly, without word-wires, agitate the thought-ether everywhere, so that any other mind that happens to be attuned to the intellectual wave will be prompted by it? Since Jules Verne is gone where he knows all about this, but cannot tell us, possibly Mr. H. G. Wells, who doesn't know but can tell, may be induced to discuss the subject.

The phenomenon is often noticed in other than literary matters. The Braille system of "point-writing" for the blind appeared in France simultaneously with that of my friend, the late Dr. McClelland, in America; yet I am confident there had been no previous hint of it from either inventor. Anæsthesia has at least three reputed fathers. This is harder to explain than that seven cities strove for the renown of having been the birthplace of Homer; or that the Codes of Moses and Hammurabi were coincident; or that the Jewish expectation of the Messiah was matched by something similar among pagan people, as when, a half century before the Advent, the Roman Sibyl heralded a universal monarch who would bring peace and happiness to all mankind. When Virgil congratulated his friend Pollio on the birth of a son, saying

that he might be the coming deliverer of men from all their ills, was he a plagiarist of the Jewish prophets?

Whence come these common thoughts? Somewhere Max Müller says,—“Thoughts flow through my innermost being like meteors which shoot from heaven toward earth, but are extinguished before they reach their goal.” Are there more observers than one who detect these celestial monitors before they disappear, and try to tell the dark world what they mean?

But I had better stop this sort of speculation, lest I inherit the woe of those who are guilty of ogling the unrevealed, whom the poet represents in Purgatory with heads reversed on their shoulders and tears streaming down their backs.

## IX

### REST CURES

#### *Change of Thought.*

**I**N common with most men whose ambition puts a strain upon their abilities I once found myself verging toward a breakdown. While the passion for success was not diminished, indeed rather increased by some tastings of the spicery in the cup, I was becoming more easily wearied with intellectual application; the draught smacked too much of the dregs. Subjects which once had been pursued with zest until midnight became stale before midday. Mental energy was getting not only torpid, but a little rheumatic, so that exertion became painful.

To this was soon added nervous irritability. I resorted to the weed, only to find, what I believe to be the general experience, that, while it solaced for the time being as I watched the encircling clouds, it was invariably followed by greater lassitude and increased petulance.

My physician put me through the usual course of tonics, baths, diets, household gymnastics, and days off; and with the usual result that I was none

the less stupid at my study-table. He then prescribed total rest for a while.

While seeking for some convenient "belt of calm" where I could drop anchor, I was more wisely counselled by a friend, the editor of one of our leading periodicals:—"You can't rest in idleness. You are not built that way. If you try to anchor, you will find a ground-swell in your nature that will trouble you far more than the high waves of intensest pursuit. Your mind will grind on and on just the same, and if you give it no grist of interesting topics it will simply grind on itself and become permanently injured. You need not cessation from work, but change of work. I've been down in your dump myself, and know how to crawl out better than your doctors do. If you attempt to rest by stagnating you will only stir up your own sediment. Come to the office. Give me a semi-weekly column—on any topic you please, except those which have heretofore occupied you. Write up foreign affairs, thunder away on national matters, or 'shoot folly as it flies' in fashionable and conventional life. Your brain needs rotation in crops, new seeding."

For a time I took his advice. I succeeded. I won for his paper some abuse for its editorial articles—"a true sign of journalistic ability" was my friend's encouraging comment—and at the same time I felt myself being relieved from my malady. This surprised me; for, instead of lessening, I had added to the bulk of my daily task, yet found in it

a stimulus which reacted favorably upon my ordinary professional work. I had not rested, but I had recreated.

Since then I have always had a side "iron in the fire," something that pleased my fancy, upon which I could work off the ennui that comes from undivided application. My library table had two sides. On this side I toiled at my professional work. Across yonder I played, though there my pen scratched at breakneck rate. My friend was right; the mind cannot rest. It is the only mechanism that has demonstrated perpetual motion. The judicious wear of it—that is, without the tear—makes it run more smoothly. It is more alert and active than the eagle; for the eagle at times stays upon the nest, while the mind rests best upon the wing;—only give it new prey to search and different altitudes through which to soar.

In these experiments I made a discovery. I found in myself tastes and adaptabilities that I had not before suspected. If I had known them in earlier days the knowledge might have given an entirely different direction to my life. But at forty it is too late to transplant oneself into another profession. The old roots will not form about them the new mould closely enough to draw full nurture.

But yet at that age, or even later,—like old trees—we can take on new grafts. And sometimes the graft will bear better fruit than that produced directly by the old tree. I have a notion that it has been so with me, as I look at the two piles of stuff,

the one professional, the other extra-professional, that I have garnered during these later years.

Such experience is, I think, not uncommon. We cull that which is sweetest and best oftentimes along the side paths, rather than on the beaten highway where we drag our heavy burdens. Robert C. Ogden was a business man; his career was that of buyer and seller and an employer of men; but we erect his monument at Hampton and in our hearts because he found his recreation in philanthropy. Stedman was a banker; but who cares for that when reading his poems? Morse was a portrait painter; we never think of it when we telegraph with his code. The dynamo is only a device for gathering up the side spray from the wire while the main current goes on; but perhaps electro-magnetic induction is the most useful discovery in the whole field of modern science. We light our houses, drive our trolleys and machine shops by this side-play of the titanic force. Is brain-work exceptional in this respect?

### *Literary Diversion.*

As already intimated, I have been guilty of making some books, and thus adding to the burden upon the popular mind. In extenuation of my offense I avow that I never wilfully attempted to enter the literary fraternity, conceiving that one profession is enough for any man of ordinary abilities.

Now and then, however, there has been swung open to me a favorable opportunity to investigate a subject that ought to be in the public interest, and

I have felt it to be a duty to lend my pen to the printer. Or some period of history has engrossed me, and for my own better information I have set in order its events and the impressions they have made.

A great delight—something left over from childish habit—has been to imagine myself living in some other land and age, and to attempt to paint the scenes with which I would there and then have been familiar. This has led me to read more carefully, to dig out from libraries the older books—which are generally the fuller books, of which the more recent are apt to be partial compilations or, at best, condensations—to familiarize myself with folk-lore, and now and then to journey far away in order to confirm or correct present impressions.

Library pals and publishers have persuaded me that the public would be interested in what I had found, and so I have let my craft drift in among the motley fleet of so-called “current literature.” But the chief incentive has been my own pleasure and recreation.

A semi-fiendish pastime has been to occasionally play the literary critic of others. There is nothing more fascinating than to read a really thoughtful book with the care necessary to its correct assaying. Such study stimulates and informs us as, perhaps, no other intellectual work does.

Besides, reviewing gives one a sense of moral uplift as one realizes that he is thus introducing others to helpful reading or warning them against

that which will only result in a waste of time,—this latter consideration being important in our day when there is an overflight of goose-quills.

But unfortunately the profession of critics is crowded with those who are unfitted, both as respects ability and conscience, for their task. Half-educated men and women, who could not have written a page of what they oracularly “review,” label our new books with commendation or condemnation, and the dear public takes the label instead of a sample. We buy our literary stuff by the package, as we do our kitchen foods, and, alas! there are no Pure Food Laws to guard our mental pabulum. The “critic” who can write a fetching advertisement is the most valuable man about some publishing offices. In a case known to me a successful drummer was taken from the road, and installed in the place of prospectus writer, taking the position long occupied by one who had himself written masterpieces.

So it oftentimes comes to pass that books of the greatest importance are left in manuscript obscurity because they were not sufficiently nimble-footed to get to the head of the procession of prospective big sellers. Books that are sparkling with gems of thought remain buried under the spangles of their own pall. Manuscripts are rejected by a dozen publishers only to be rescued by a lucky thirteenth who happens to be his own “reader.” Trash is marketed by the ton, because the office critic happened at the time to be too full of lunch, or had such large

holes in his brain that he was unappreciative of the finer stuff that sifted through.

An incident among my own first attempts to fly in public will illustrate this. I sent a sketch to one of our best periodicals. It was returned with the usual thanks and regrets. It appeared later in another magazine. Its appearance there brought a letter from the first publisher stating that he had read with interest the article in the rival periodical, and promising goodly remuneration for one of like character.

Reviewers of published books are often as uncertain in their judgments. Having worked on such teams I may be allowed to criticize some off-side plays of my comrades.

I have had occasion to look over some fifty "criticisms" of a well-known book. More than a third of these were made up of identical sentences repeated from the publisher's advance trade advertisement.

One of our prominent journals was accustomed to send all books for review to a certain versatile schoolmarm, whose remuneration for her "opinions" was the privilege of adding the precious *mé-lange* to her own library or selling it to second-hand dealers at half the publishers' price. These books were upon all sorts of subjects—the Pragmatic Philosophy, the Atomic Theory of the Constitution of the Universe, Psychic Research, travels in Arabia, dialect stories of Indiana and Pitlochrie, adventures among cowboys, life in the slums or amid fashion-

able society rot. The lady in question was sufficiently eclectic or versatile—doubtless with the help of her favorite scholars—to sound all the depths and shallows of the world's current thinking!

An amusing instance of maladroitness reviewing came under my eye. I had published a book entitled *Incentives for Life*, made up of moral and religious advice to young people. A journal of wide circulation gave the book praise.

“There,” said the author, “is a critic who knows what he is talking about.”

But at the end of a half column of blarney he was disillusioned. The reviewer had evidently mistaken the title, and thought the book was written against the growing habit of suicide from lack of “Incentive” to keep on living. The closing sentence of this precious critique read,—“The book presents in succinct form, logical connection and elegant diction, all the considerations which might be supposed to induce men to live when they would rather die; but it is a work of kindly supererogation; for when momentarily overcome by unusual burdens, or by the pressure of long-continued weight upon the spirit, men hasten to shuffle off the mortal coil,” etc. And this about a book written for the Sunday-school and not for the Suicide Club!

One well known to me published a work relating to a period of medieval history. To make it more valuable to scholars the publisher suggested a thorough bibliographical appendix. The most noted ex-

pert attached to the Astor Library in New York was engaged to prepare the work. Page after page of condensed type gave the list of possible books of reference. All the sources of information were thoroughly explored. Every bound volume, every pamphlet or manuscript that was catalogued in the world's libraries was cited. But a reviewer in a critical journal, after praising the style of the new book, coolly remarked that from the "meagre bibliography appended" he doubted the author's erudition. It was afterward discovered that the list given lacked nothing except a pamphlet that the critic himself had once written on the subject. Yet the criticism undoubtedly affected the sale of the work.

I once was led to test by experience the life in the cheapest night-lodging houses. The motley crowd of old bums and unfortunates most cruelly impressed me, a mere tenderfoot in such semi-civilized environment. While the sensations, both moral and physical, were still painfully upon me, I wrote a sketch of what I had discovered. A weekly complimented my gift for romancing, but informed its readers that, of course, there was really no such low grade life in our country.

"Confession is good for the soul," so I will tell the following of my own sad lapse from the virtue of a true critic.

I had agreed to review a work by a well-known author. His subject was rather mystical, and his method of dealing with it was in spots too profound

for my fathoming line. I sought out the sage himself.

"Tell me plainly, Doctor, just what you were driving at when you wrote the book."

He explained his theme, and threaded his arguments in glittering array. Yet I could not take in his full design. I said, "Please write me a letter, for I have reason to be interested in your work."

"Gladly," he replied, "for the thick-headed reviewers haven't brains enough to grasp my ideas."

The letter was a little clearer than our conversation, but still not sufficiently illuminating to allow me to risk putting the subject on the public screen through my somewhat opaque mental lens. I therefore wrote a brief introduction in which I portrayed the deserved renown of the writer of the book; also some closing words of general commendation, for the work had many incidental beauties, brilliant epigrams and rare philosophical deductions. I filled the bulk of the critique with my friend's own elucidation of the topic, which I took word for word from his letter.

A few weeks later at our club the learned writer said to me, "There is only one man who seems to understand my book. He is the fellow who reviewed me in ———. No man has the right to criticize another's work unless he possesses a sort of telepathic power of putting himself at the centre of an author's soul and looking out. That fellow has done it. Read his review. It will clear up some

things which you apparently didn't understand the other day."

Whether his remark was a wise rule for critics in general, or was suggested by a suspicion of my theft, I am uncertain. But I am certain that I did not lose a friend by my plagiarism.

### *Rapid Motion.*

Mental relief produced by change of studies and habitual lines of professional interest proved so beneficial to me that I was induced to try a larger dose of it. The opportunity for a few months' cruise and tramp in the Middle Orient offered the sugar-coating for the rather bitter pill of absence from those whom I loved; so I sailed away. The log of that voyage will show that it was not deficient in furnishing at least change of thought.

Allowing, as I thought, an abundance of time for crossing the Atlantic, I counted upon at least four days in London before leaving for Naples, where I would take steamer for Alexandria. I therefore left all preparation for the tour, outfit and the like, to be made in England. Unfortunately a storm protracted my ocean trip two days; and, as if some vengeful Venus were bent on thwarting a diminutive Ulysses, the Mediterranean steamer put her sailing date two days ahead. This used up my expected four days in London.

At Charing Cross Station I was informed that it was useless to attempt reaching Naples in time for the sailing of the vessel. The various travelling

agencies gave me the same unconsoling advice. Luckily I ran across an exceptionally canny manager of one of these latter helpful concerns. After walking up and down his office for five minutes he turned suddenly:

“If you can leave London in half an hour I’ll put you on your steamer.”

“Impossible!” I replied. “I have all my arrangements to make.”

“Nonsense! The fewer arrangements you make for that trip the fewer disappointments you will have.”

“But I must have my passport viséd at the Turkish Consulate, money arranged for at my bankers, clothing bought. Besides, I am hungry and tired, and I have promised myself a good feed and a rest with some English friends. I’ll take the next boat for Egypt.”

“This is the last good boat for the season. The next would bring you too late to see what you ought to see in the land. It is already almost too hot to go. Now I’ll have your passport viséd, and sent to reach you at the first place where you will need it. As for money,—let me see your letter of credit! All right! I’ll advance all the money you will need. It’s up to you. Thirty minutes to do London and the British Empire! What do you say?”

I took a ten-seconds’ twirl on my heel, and said, “I’ll do it.” Ten minutes sufficed for the purchase of a shop suit of travelling clothes, whose chief merit was that they already looked dirty, and

would probably not be further soiled by desert dust. Ten minutes more were spent in an Epicurean debauch at a lunch counter. In eight minutes more I was at Charing Cross Station. My friend and I arrived almost simultaneously.

“Get in here!” he said, pushing me into a first-class compartment. “Here is your money; Bank of England bills; some French gold, and a handful of silver. Here is a package of letters introducing you to various hotel nabobs who will want to serve me even if they don’t know you. And here is your ticket to Marseilles.”

“To Marseilles! I’m not going to Marseilles. I’m going to Naples.”

“That’s right,” he replied, gently pressing me back into my seat. “But you are going to Naples by way of Marseilles. I have figured it out that your ship starts from Marseilles and stops at Naples; and that if you are not delayed in getting to Paris, and if the train loses no time going south from there, and if you yourself don’t get left at some lunch counter on the way, you will get to Marseilles about sunrise day after to-morrow, and your boat doesn’t sail until seven o’clock. *Bon voyage!*” And he was gone.

Surely with a series of almost wrecking storms on the Atlantic, and this hustling of a London travelling agent, I was getting “a change of thought.” In fact I could hardly keep up with my own meditations. I recalled the story of the tortoise which was seized by an eagle, and dropped upon the bald

head of a philosopher. The experience of the creature as he was gyrating downward must have been approximately like my own as I was being whirled away on my unknown journey.

I reached my steamer at Marseilles just as she was blowing her last whistle, pulled out to her in the last rowboat, and secured her last vacant berth. I spent the days of the crossing in making pockets in my new travelling suit (for I found that it was without these essentials of male attire), in protesting with the captain against his custom of allowing ship-rats to eat off the kid tops of the passengers' gaiters, and in resenting the claims of sundry English people, who, because Britannia ruled the sea, imagined that they could appropriate all the comforts of a French steamer.

In Cairo I put up at Shepard's hotel, which had recently opened. But having, through recent events, acquired an active turn of mind, I found myself bored with the monotonous kaleidoscope of European fashions inside the great hostelry, and outside with the continuous parade of green turbans, in which the newfangled saints of the town impressed strangers with the fact that they were returning from Mecca. I wanted a change, so penetrated the interior of the town, and put up at—or rather, put up with—a Portuguese-Arab tavern.

Here I was in the midst of antipodal novelties, with the real Egypt thick upon me. Except for the broken English of the chief butler of the establish-

ment I might have imagined myself transported to the age of the Pharaohs. At night the illusion was sharply realistic, for several of the plagues of that period were rehearsed in my sleeping apartment. My bed was in the middle of the room, its posts resting in jars of water. When the candles were brought the walls seemed to be covered with tapestries of watered silk, gently moving in the evening zephyr. A closer inspection revealed myriads of white fleas that had been disturbed by the light and were changing positions, possibly being mobilized for a night attack. In the interest of anthropological and zoological science I endured my lodgings for several days, and then scratched out.

Now that my brain was in rapid motion, going after "new thoughts," I found the whole land of Egypt was rather monotonous. Primitive peoples affect an observer very much as do the animals in a monkey cage; the pranks of the pre-homos entertain for a while, but tire us with their uninventive sameness. Naked fellahs drawing water from the Nile, short-skirted boys driving donkeys with sticks, camels grunting their dissatisfaction with labor laws, fakirs and snake-charmers practicing the tricks that Aaron worsted them in three thousand years ago, villages of wattles and sun-dried mud,—these set off ruined temples and pyramids as crawling moths adorn an ancient burial pall. So I sought easement for my new passion for novelty by going to Palestine.

*Entertaining Royalty.*

But monotony followed me. Where the railroad joined the Suez Canal our company of tourists were met by a handsome white-mustached gentleman who introduced himself as Count de Lesseps, the promoter of the big endeavor.

Said he, "Gentlemen, the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria is about to visit the Holy Land. In a few moments he will arrive at the dock. I suggest that all the Europeans in the place—and you and I are about all there are of such worthies—give him a welcome to this ancient land."

As it would be a novel sensation for a democratic American to be introduced to even a small lump of royalty, I joined the Committee of Reception. A half-dozen of us, representing as many different nationalities, arrayed in white helmets, tarbooshes, caps or slouched hats and dusters, enacted the court scene, received His Royal Highness's smiles, and the handshake of his attendants.

The next day the canal brought me to Port Said. The major domo of our hotel announced,—“Gentlemen, the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria is about to visit the Holy Land. In a few moments he will arrive at the dock. You are asked to take part in welcoming him.” I basked again in the smile of the House of Hapsburg, but noticed that said smile had a sort of interrogation-mark twist to it as he surveyed our faces.

We booked for Joppa. A cholera scare had led the authorities of Port Said to refuse landing to the

passengers just arrived from the northern coast. They must return by the same ship that brought them. Hence I could not secure a berth, but slept on deck under the eavesdroppings of a rather foggy heaven, wedged in between two families of unwashed Arabs, and sharing with them—I will not say what. My dreams were monotonous.

At Joppa the port-master received us with the enthusiastic news,—“Gentlemen, the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria is about to visit the Holy Land. In a few moments he will be at the dock. Be so kind as to assist in welcoming him.”

I can appreciate the apparent nonchalance of distinguished actors in repeating for the tenth time their recall before the footlights. Even this triple favor of the royal smile had lost its zest, notwithstanding that said smile had now elongated itself into a laugh as the Prince recognized the old gang of his friends and admirers. I have a notion that he prized our welcome as the actress who recognizes the same bouquet in its successive appearances enjoys the scent of the flowers. Several of the Prince's suite closely invested our company so that we could not have drawn dirk or pistol to assassinate His Brevet Majesty if we had been so disposed.

Joppa was in excitement. Almost every horse that was neither blind nor spavined had been engaged for the royal cortège. Tourists were allowed to select from the residue. My own beast could only limp on four legs and canter or gallop on three,

which promised some new sensation to relieve any otherwise monotonous happenings of the journey.

In courtesy we allowed the more splendid princely retinue of Austria to precede us on the road up to Jerusalem. But royal dust is as disagreeable as any other kind of dust to a democrat; so, at a turn in the highway, in spite of the protestations of our dragoman, we took a short cut across a field full of boulders, and made our triumphal entry into the city some hours ahead of the national guest. We were hardly quartered at our hotel when an official, in bagged trousers pinned fast at the waist by sundry stilettos and pistols, announced,—“Gentlemen, the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria is about to enter the Holy City. Be kind enough to assist at his reception at the Joppa Gate.” I did so; but I could not avoid the feeling that, by my ubiquitous nearness to His Majesty, I had come to be looked upon as a possible Ravallac or Wilkes Booth.

A few days later I was loitering about the Temple Plaza on Mount Zion when my meditations were interrupted by another bedizzened official, who informed me, in a tone so gentle that it suggested bakhshish, that the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria was about to visit the sacred precinct. Would I like to join in welcoming him at the Mosque of Omar?

I have taken a prejudice against the whole family of Francis Joseph, which no reading of its history, not even the tragic taking off of Rudolph, has less-

ened; and am prepared to agree with most writers that Austria was for a thousand years an international nuisance, which has at length been cleaned off the face of the earth, together with all its race of princelings.

### *Camping and Tramping.*

There is no place like Palestine for great, soul-affecting impressions, that is, if one will take time for them to soak in. I absorbed a fortnight's worth of them in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and then started north for quicker sensations. The first night out we had a congenial brain-shaking. Our camp was attacked by robbers who looted several tents. We had in our company a high church clergyman, who was as punctilious in the matter of clerical dress as he was confident of his own ordination of heaven. His duty to "the cloth" was not affected by the scorching heat of the sun, the dry dust that turned his once black suit into the likeness of a white shroud, the saddle wear on his trousers rump and calf, nor the scanty toilet of the camp. At daybreak we were aroused by this gentleman's agonizing outcry, "We are robbed! We are robbed!"

Rushing from our various tents we saw a sight that sent the shivers through several female hearts. There stood the valiant man, panoplied in all his proprieties—almost. Notwithstanding his fright he had adjusted his shovel hat, buttoned his high-cut vest, gotten his round collar properly back side

front, hung the golden cross at the right spot over his stomach;—he had forgotten nothing—except his trousers! These doubtless the diminutive size of his mirror had led him to overlook. I have often thought of him as the most faithful of the Scribes. No “mint, anise or cummin” would he have omitted, although, perhaps through inadvertence, he might have forgotten some “weightier matter of the law.”

Our dragoman was a daring fellow. Said he, “If I permit this robbery by the Arabs to go unpunished I can never come again this way with safety.” As there was no law in those parts we were accompanied by forty stalwart Lebanon men. With these the dragoman made a raid on the neighboring Arab village, brought back a captive, and beat him soundly in sight of his own people.

“How do you know that this man is guilty? Why not try him first?” we asked.

Farah replied, “Then I could never punish him at all, for an Arab can lie himself out of any offense.”

He tied the presumed robber’s hands behind his back, haltered him to a mule, and marched him all day under the eye of a Lebanon man to Shechem. Result,—the culprit escaped, carrying with him the contents of his guard’s pocket. I understand why the gamin of New York, whom the redoubtable Thackeray confessed that he could never outwit, are called “street Arabs.”

Our dragoman warned us almost daily not to

wander away from the main column, lest we should be cut off and held for ransom. Neglect of this advice gave us another brain-shake.

A Druse village hangs on one of the steep slopes of Hermon, like a wasps' nest on a house-side. So close are the houses that the roof of one dwelling serves as the door-yard of the one above it. Our party entered the village from the valley below. As soon as we were seen the whole population, men, women, naked children and dogs, came leaping down from roof to roof, as if to repel an attack. I wished that our dragoman had not told us that the Druses were the most ferocious tribesmen on Lebanon; how a few years before they had murdered eleven thousand Christians in their bloody zealotry; how Sitt Naaify, a she-devil and their leader, had urged them to leave alive no Christian between seven and seventy years old. Our fears were, however, somewhat allayed by the news that Sitt had "gone to her own place," and when last heard from was on the river Styx, where she had taken in a heavy laundering job of washing the blood-marks from her own soul.

The Druses, finding that we came peaceably, were quite friendly. This they showed by their personal interest in everything we had, hats, coats, shoe-strings, and, unless you happened to have your own hands in them, the contents of your pockets.

Three of our party who were Americans were induced by our racial curiosity to visit the Sheikh who had come to see the meaning of the tumult.

This worthy had a face as broad as a lion's, and similarly framed with light tawny hair. It would have been attractive but for his eyes, one of which turned upward, the other downward, leaving in our minds a doubt as to his character which was not settled by the dénouement of the story. He invited us into his house, stepped out of his sandals, curled up barefoot on his rug, and bade us to make ourselves equally at home. This we proceeded to do, when our host suddenly exploded in what seemed to us a fit of spontaneous combustion. He raged at one of our number who had trodden his rug without removing his boots. The hubbub brought a crowd of Druses about and into the house. We appointed one of us to do the honors for the others; to take off his boots, and curl up beside our host. All was amiability for a moment or two, until we discovered that a most diabolical-looking Druse had appropriated the boots, and paraded before the crowd admiring his dirty legs in their splendid ending. In vain we demanded the restoration of the boot-y. "Bakhshish! Bakhshish!" was the cry of the crowd. Hands were stretched out, fumbling our watch-chains, and feeling the bulges made by our pocketbooks. Physical resistance was out of the question. "Divide and conquer" is an old military maxim. We tried it. Touching with my finger the hairy breast-bone of the Sheikh, I said, with voice as heroic as the tremor of my muscles permitted:—"Good Sheikh bakhshish! All bakhshish to good Sheikh!" Then with a look of as much with-

ering scorn as I thought safe to display, I turned to the crowd,—“No bakhshish!”

This appeal to the Sheikh's cupidity worked like the charmed words we read about in an Arabian tale. He seized the thief, literally shook him out of his boots, and with loud outcry drove the crowd away.

What sum should we pay Old Mammon for our ransom? We prepared to divide our fortunes. I took from my pocket a handful of silver coins, intending to delve deeper for yellow metal. But the Sheikh's lower eye was fascinated with the white gleam. I gave him an English half-crown. He was as delighted as a child. He kissed my hand, and led us three Americans back to our company.

“It turned out all right,” commented our dragoon, “but if that old humbug hadn't known that I was Farah of Zahleh, in charge of this expedition, he would have scraped you down to the skin. Don't be so foolish again.”

At Damascus I had another excitement of “goose-flesh.” A Mohammedan gentleman of widest burnoose, a Past Master in the Masonic Fraternity, showed us the utmost courtesy. He was a man of unusual beauty of countenance, almost femininely amiable, and with a voice that would not have frightened a nightingale from singing in the bush under his window. His home was palatial, and furnished with even Oriental extravagance, though with perfect taste. His manner and environment betokened the gentlest of souls.

But a large hall in the dwelling was devoted to the storage of arms. Pendant from the walls, stacked in corners, loaded into boxes to be carried away in sudden emergency, were all sorts of weapons, bludgeons, cutlasses, rapiers, bayonets, pistols, rifles. When I asked him through our interpreter the occasion of such an accumulation, he replied as amiably as a girl showing her jewels,—“To kill Christians.”

This man had been the leader of the great massacre in 1860, the witness of which is the crowded cemetery just outside the city gate.

I thought, “This murderer and I belong to the same humanity. There is in us both the hidden dynamite of cruelty that the jostling of sudden hate, or even the scratching of bigotry, may explode. Yes, my ancestors slew his ancestors on these same fields during that racial insanity called the Crusades. And back of that our forebears doubtless brained one another in the Stone Age in their fights for their caves and harems.”

An affair at Baalbek made us realize that the strife of Christian and Paynim was not yet over. We were accustomed to send our tent-makers and cooks an hour ahead of us, so that at nightfall we would not be belated with dinner and rest. On our arrival that day at the famous ruin there was no sign of our helpers. The sunset reddened the big stones, as when they once dripped with the bloody sacrifice to Baal. Later the stars nested like white doves in the tall columns of the Temple of Jupiter.

But Yusef and Yakub, our chief butler and chief baker and their attendant satellites, did not appear. It was late in the night before they arrived. Some were limping, some were bruised on head, back or shins. One or two showed dangerous wounds. They had evidently been through a fearful battle.

Their story was that as they were going quietly through a Moslem village they were set upon by the entire population. They defended themselves as they were able, but failed to rescue several pieces of baggage which the assailants had captured during the *mêlée*.

We made complaint at the local court of the pashalic. The accused villagers were summoned to answer. A number of their chief men came. On our side a dozen honest-looking fellows testified, and corroborated their testimony with the evidence of cuts and bruises. They estimated their assailants at a hundred. On the other side of the case was only one witness. He was an old and very decrepit man who hobbled on a crutch. This witness declared, by his hope of Paradise, that, the day having been a local saint's day, all the men of the village except himself had been away at the tomb; that these Lebanon marauders made an attack upon the women and children; that he alone, with that same crutch, had defended the place, cracking this man's skull, gashing that man's back, and driving the whole unbelieving horde pell-mell out of the village. A roar of laughter from both sides greeted this bombastic but evident lie. Then the judge deliberated.

From his alternate grins and frowns it was clear that his judgment was somewhat puzzled. At length came the momentous decision,—“Since on the one side are various stories from we know not whom, while on the other side is the word of a good and worthy Mohammedan well known to us, we must decide that the strangers have no grievance.”

Then up rose our valiant dragoman. “I am Farah Maloup of Zahleh. I see by your blanching that you know that name. Unless within twenty-four hours our baggage is restored, and an apology sent, I swear by the biggest stone in these ruined walls, that I will return with five hundred of the young men of Zahleh. We will burn your town.”

The judge and the chief men among the villagers were in a quandary. Zahleh could exterminate them. They consulted. They apologized. The next day our baggage was safely in camp.

My “change of thought” required several more doses. At Beirut I was taken sick. A good missionary and his wife sought me out, took me from the hotel, and nursed me back to travelling health. While convalescing I visited a large female Bible class. There were over a hundred young women. To get the real beauty of blushes occasioned by the kissing of the Syrian sun, one must see many together, as we get the color of the waves of the sea from their multitudinous movement. Black eyes and black hair, set off by snow-white veils jauntily adjusted at one side, in mute protest against the enslavement of the harem, made me wish that the

women in our home churches could witness such a scene, and lay aside their kaleidoscopic head-gear during worship. It would add very materially to the "beauty of holiness."

A very touching thing occurred. While the leader of the class was speaking to these people, I noticed that they turned and looked at me as if with peculiar interest. After the service I asked the missionary the occasion of this, since I regarded myself as a total stranger to them.

"Oh," said he, "I was telling them that the gentleman on the platform is the father of Davie."

"But what do they know of my Davie?"

"Why, I translated the story of your blind child to them, as I read it in an American journal. They all know Davie."

The sea is wide. The gulf between races is often wider. But personal sympathy will bridge them both.

On my return home I told this story to my neighbors. In their kindly remembrance of the little fellow they insisted upon raising a fund with which they endowed a perpetual scholarship in Beirut Syrian College, as a memorial of the lad's brief but heroic life.

### *Some Human Curios.*

There frequently camped near us in our journey through Palestine an English gentleman who was travelling with his niece. We exchanged visits, jogged along together at times, and thus became

well acquainted. At Beirut this gentleman came to us in great alarm. His niece had announced her engagement in marriage to the dragoman of their party. This dragoman was a handsome fellow; an American, by the way. His father had been a religious crank, and had gone to the Holy Land anticipating the Second Coming of Christ on Mount Zion. If the young man had forgotten his religion, he had not forgotten his Shakespeare, and was prepared to play the Othello to any heiress whom he could impress with his romances of adventure, or lure with his marvellous prospects of building a "Castle in Syria."

The niece was obdurate in her purpose to remain in the land, and devote a large fortune, which she held in her own name, to the establishment of an estate, and the spreading of her husband's fame. We advised the gentleman to take his niece back to England.

"But the British Consul declares that would be an illegal act, as the woman is of legal age."

Farah, our dragoman, cut the Gordian Knot.— "Take her by force. If you don't, we other dragomans—and there are a score of us now in town—will murder the bridegroom, so that we will have a funeral prelude to the wedding."

We Americans agreed to countenance the abduction by our presence, and the plan was adopted. When the lady heard of it she attempted suicide by throwing herself from the hotel window. But big Farah rescued her. A procession was formed,

Farah taking one of her arms, her uncle the other, our party closely investing so that the crowd was not attracted by the lady's resistance, and twenty other dragomans making an outer defense against any attack by the infuriated Othello. Thus the lady was deposited on the Austrian Lloyd steamer.

Some weeks later, while wandering about the Acropolis at Athens, I came upon the English party. As the lady knew of my complicity in the affair at Beirut, I attempted to avoid them. But the young woman pursued me. She called me by name, and with such kindness that I could not resist her persuasion to "come and see Uncle Ben!" Uncle Ben, the first greeting over, whispered,—  
"She has no remembrance of the affair."

In this surmise I am sure that he was correct, for while she spoke freely of other matters, and even of her dragoman, she showed not the slightest interest in him, beyond remarking that he was a great braggart.

Six months later I received from the gentleman a letter which read,—  
"You will be glad to learn that my niece has been happily married to Mr. ———, of London, to whom she had been engaged for several years."

Alas! How unreliable is the human brain! Mental machinery often gets "a bug in its wheels." Some things in my own life,—and in the lives of some of my friends—have been so decidedly foolish that they seem to have been due to lapse of intelligence.

Still searching for change of thought I took a small coasting steamer at Beirut, and explored the Eastern Mediterranean. I was absolutely alone so far as home companions went, and thus dependent for conversation upon such chance acquaintances as I might be able to impress with the choicest selection and most careful handling of my personal qualities.

This is a profitable way to travel. It prevents one from developing his own idiosyncrasies, as one is apt to do when thrown constantly with those so familiar to us that we do not feel the restraint of their presence. Talking with strangers one treats them as one treats guests, giving them better entertainment than we indulge our own families in. Besides, when our travelling company is made up of home familiars much of the conversation is regarding matters across the seas, which we have presumably desired to forget. Our interest is divided. It is not easy for a group of persons to make individual acquaintances outside the group. Thus, being alone, I was free to devote myself entirely to my foreign surroundings, and to study new and strange companions.

One such person I must tell about, because of my interest in the character she revealed. Her face was as unprepossessing as one would find outside an Arab mummy-case. She seemed to have been desiccated by the winds, and discolored by the dust of the desert. She weighed less than seventy-five pounds, and was encased in a leather-like skin. Yet

there was something fascinating about her top-heavy brow, and eyes emitting flashes of black light.

I first descried her standing on the top rail of the deck, superintending the lifting of a score of Arab mares from a lighter into the ship. As the last of the animals was swung in between decks a Turkish official arrived. He read the law against the deportation of horses, and demanded the instant return of the beasts to the shore. The woman gave him a volley of abuse in Turkish, which was punctuated with profanity sufficiently cosmopolitan to be understood by bystanders of whatever nationality. During this episode the ship raised anchor, and we were off.

A tall Englishman later introduced me to the woman as his wife. Quite naturally I addressed her as Mrs. ———, using her husband's name. A neighbor corrected me aside. She was Lady ———, the granddaughter of Lord ———. My astonishment was increased when I learned that her *nom de plume* was that of an English authoress, well known for the grace of her pen, whose books I had read with delight.

Which was she at heart—the coarse virago I had seen on the ship-rail, or the refined intellect I had read? For two weeks on our cruise I enjoyed her table-talk, notwithstanding the fact that it occasionally broke into stable-talk,—like a sore on a beautiful face. Yet her refinement was not merely intellectual. Now and then she revealed great depths of soul, passionately pure and sympathetic,

such as are typical of the finest and sweetest womanhood. I could understand how that big awkward Englishman had fallen in love with her; and also how at times his commoner qualities were congenial to her. But how account for the incongruities in herself? How does the black streak get into the Parian marble?

On this same steamer was a British officer of rank, Colonel—later Sir—Charles Wilson. He was distinguished for service in the army, but was now filling high civil position. Our vessel sailed only at night, so that our days were free for inland explorations. Wherever we went the Colonel was well known. He arranged many a delightful excursion for our party, but he himself seemed to have absorbing business elsewhere. He surprised us with his detailed knowledge of places, roads, individuals, customs. In reply to my expression of amazement at all this, he replied,—“Oh, we British officers are supposed to know everything about everywhere. But for that the Empire could not build itself up. In a few days I shall leave you, and make my seventeenth journey between Smyrna and Trebizond. Yes, I am somewhat familiar with Egypt where you have been. Let me see your pocket map.” He made a small circle east of the Nile. “Now for a prophecy. Trouble is brewing there. If we have a fight it will be near that spot.”

Two years later Arabi Bey's Rebellion broke out. The world complained that the English did not chase him across the deserts. But one day there

came the news of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, in which the rebel was vanquished at a blow. It was at the centre of my circle.

I then made a mental note for my guidance in reading future history:—"England will be strong and conquering, not so much because of the genius of individual leaders, but rather because of a persistent policy which all leaders understand, an aim toward which all can direct their energies, movements carefully anticipated, and preparations patiently made. On the contrary our own country is living haphazard. An emergency, of either danger or opportunity, may find us totally unprepared." Recent events have not occasioned any change of mind.

If my vacation did not give me the needed change of thought it was not because of any lack of changing scenes. I had nosed into every nook from Alexandria to Alexandretta, and under the Taurus Mountains, through the Ægean, from the Dardanelles to the Black Sea, and through the Gulf of Corinth to Italy. Dead Pharaohs in their coffins and the sore-eyed children of Egypt to-day, Phœnician gods and the lying descendants of those who once worshipped them, Homeric heroes and the same sea-sick seas upon which they were tossed, the cataclysmic scenes of the Book of Revelation and the islands around Patmos which were still rocking with "mighty earthquake,"—these had all contributed to my diversion. My mind was stuffed to cracking with heterogeneous recollections, not

unlike the mass of spoil the Venetians took from conquered Constantinople, which has not yet, after six hundred years, been catalogued logically, chronologically, mythologically or theologically. Could my cranium ever be changed from a garret into a museum?

I stopped at Rome to let my brain rest, after in so brief a time having been transformed from a provincial American into a cosmopolitan. But the Eternal City was a worse jumble. Here antiquity, medievalism and modernity in its maddest fashions were hurled at me from every corner.

Fortunately I found in Rome a philosopher who metaphorically trephined me, and relieved my brain of the confusion due to overpressure. I had reached Rome too late for the "Season." Thank Heaven! My *albergo* had but a half-dozen guests. One gentleman greatly impressed me. He had a head as ponderous as that of John Bright or Gladstone, and a face as amiable as that of Martha Washington.

"Well, Young America, where have you been to-day?" was his introduction as he accosted me in the salon after dinner. Then followed a discourse, historical, archæological and critical, as illuminating as that which, thirty years after, I enjoyed from Lanciani or Duchesne. He gave me his name as *Mister* ———. No further information was secured from any person in the hotel. The following day I met an English resident of Rome, and mentioned my fellow lodger's erudition.

“Of course, you are impressed with it, as is all the rest of the world. He is the great Dr., Professor, Sir, Fellow of the A, B, C, D, down to Z Societies of Great Britain, Germany and Zululand. Let me give you a hint. He is in Rome practically *incog*. His last book made such a sensation that he has come to Rome in the summer time to escape being bored by admirers. I know him well enough, but he has not even notified me that he is here. So I take my revenge by being an informant against him. He has the keys to all the back-doors of our libraries, galleries and archives; but he allows nobody to have access to his quarters. If you should ‘Professor’ him, or intimate that you knew him he would shut his mouth like a clam. But he is naturally a chatty old fellow. Lucky man, you! Only respect his *incog*. and you will find him a whole treasury.”

I took my friend’s hint; and only “*Mistered*” the savant, with the result that within two weeks I took a complete post-graduate course in history, art and philosophy, with three or four hours’ daily private coaching from one of the foremost educators in the world. Thus I ended my quest for “change of thought” by acquiring new thoughts that have stood by for over a third of a century.

## XI

### FRIENDS

#### *Friends Unlike Ourselves.*

“I count myself in nothing else so happy  
As in a soul remembering my good friends.”

SO said Bolingbroke in *Richard II*—and so say I. Yet my experience of friendship does not lead me to approve of some of the stereotyped laws which are presumed to govern that gentle art. For example, Shakespeare makes Portia say that

. . . “in companions  
. . .  
There must needs be a like proportion  
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit:  
Which makes me think that this Antonio,  
Being the bosom lover of my lord,  
Must needs be like my lord.”

On the contrary, my closest friends, those who have most attracted me, those whose love has been what old Robert Blair called “the mysterious cement of the soul,” and have held me to themselves in lifelong adhesion, have frequently been very unlike myself. As a rule they have not been

members of my own profession, whom I meet almost daily and with them feed upon the same mental pabulum; nor were they those in my immediate social and neighborhood circles with whom I am supposed to have identical interests. They have been rather persons who have happened to cross my path as we pursued different occupations, led by dissimilar tastes, and often aiming at diverse ideals. As two drops of foreign liquids, having some subtle chemical affinity, unite at the touch, so have we. The assimilative property in each has been something subtler than anything I find in our conventional formulas for friendship; indeed, something that passes my power of analysis.

Some one has said that we should "choose an author as we choose a friend." I try to; and, therefore, I delight chiefly in books that are devoid of the technicalities of my own daily occupation. I love a style as diverse from my own spavined, short-winded verbiage as are the rhetorical antipodes of Carlyle and Addison. Especially fascinating is a philosophy that makes me while reading feel that my brain is being elongated in spots, even if it be twisted into interrogation points. And so with the choice of friends. I get awfully tired of myself; and next to that I weary of the monotonous companionship of people who always agree with me.

In this I must dissent from even the great Cicero, whose essay on Friendship seems to have been written simply "by the page," or whose habit as an hired advocate led him to follow up a subject

as he followed up a case in litigation, using every possible relevant saying, and leaving to the judges the duty of rejecting whatever was not true. The oratorical philosopher was known to have more egoism than friends, else his experience would have refuted his notion when he wrote,—“Friendship is a perfect conformity of opinions upon all religious and civil subjects, united with the highest degree of mutual esteem and affection.” And again, “Whoever is in possession of a true friend sees the exact counterpart of his own soul.”

Let me tell of some of my friends, and of what happy fellowship we have had in spite of the fact that we differed in ideas and tastes as much as the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope differ in shape and color, yet combine in marvellous unity of reflected beauty.

I am neither an artist nor a scientist; yet a gentleman who was both, and was, moreover, so absorbed in the technicalities of his double pursuit that I could not understand him when he mounted either of his favorite hobbies, admitted me to his heart, and let me ramble at will in its most secluded chambers. When absent we corresponded. There was in his letters no “art-study,” except an occasional side-splitting lead-pencil caricature of men and scenes that mere language could not depict; and not enough science to determine whether he was abroad attending a meeting of the British Association or a cricket match. When we were together we told each other our secret fears and

hopes. We never "talked shop," for that was excluded by our mutual ignorance of how the other kept the domestic pot boiling. We only sat, as it were, in our doorways like two neighborly housewives, gossiping about the passing throng, and looking off toward the common horizon.

We liked to vacation together in the country. We would start off in company for an afternoon; he with his easel to catch some secret of a flying wing, or some mystery of light that was shredded by the almost prismatic bark of a birch or beech tree; I with my rifle and a copy of some woodsy book, to rid the field of woodchucks and my mind of uncanny things that had burrowed there. A mile or two from home we would part so as not to interrupt each other in what he called our idiot-syncrazies (some good psychology in that), only keeping within hallooing distance for the sense of company. In the early gloaming we would tramp homeward with the familiarity of two boys who are joint partners in a string of fish. Then what revels o' nights, until our respective spouses grew jealous of us, and threatened lawsuit for alienation of marital affections!

When a shadow hung over me that was too sacred for priestly confessional, this man's cheer dispelled it. And to me he one day told a dread secret, known only to himself and his physician,—that death was not far away. So I walked with him along the brink until his foot slipped into the echoless abyss.

Ever since then I have felt "the footsteps of his life in mine." He still companions me in rambles through the familiar forest and glades. I think he is waiting to greet me just beyond the Great Woods; and when I meditate about the last stretch homeward I imagine that I hear his welcoming halloo from not very far away. How that takes the chill of loneliness out of an old fellow's bones!

But we were so different! As diverse as the notch in the key and the ward in the lock; our very unlikenesses fitting us the better for each other. Some day we will understand the strange mechanism of friendship.

I am not an autopsist of dead languages; yet one of my chums from boyhood was a man who dreamed in Greek, except when his nightmares insisted on whinnying in Latin.

I have no trade-gumption or taste, yet there was a business devotee, the wheels in whose head were apparently adapted to nothing but a calculating machine or cash-register, who confessed that to drive a bargain was sweeter to him than music, sleep or dinner; but he would bleed his pocketbook to supply any whim I might have. I would do the same for him, although I had not sufficient interest in his sort of life to even look over my butcher's monthly account.

Another friend sends me annual volumes containing reports of his expert work in a subject that absorbs his mind and heart; but which I would not be hired to read without substituting in my in-

surance policy the words "lunatic asylum" for the word "death." But no table of statistics would be long enough to record the items of kindness which for a half-century have passed between us.

I think also of a group of very humble people, whose lack of education makes sustained conversation upon almost any subject impossible. But we have delightful chats over the fence when the dog has gone to gather the herd, or over the counter when customers are slack, or in the little parlor when the kids have gone to sleep and we can talk about them without tickling their vanity. Though these people cannot tell me much that enlightens me, I love to hear the sound of their voices as I love Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words." Their faces show their characters written in hieroglyph. How much beauty and goodness and inner charm I have learned to decipher there! There are, too, hand-shakes, so rough and hard that they make one's fingers ache, but which also make the heart's blood bound to livelier pulse, and impart health to both body and soul. One can appreciate what is said of a great philosopher, "He loved to be with the higher spirits and the lowly people."

I am persuaded, then, that sameness of intellectual, æsthetic, cultural or even of religious ideals has little to do with the reciprocity of souls.

### *Antagonistic Friends.*

I will go even further:—Positive antagonism of

opinions and tastes do not menace friendship. We often love devotedly those whose ideas and ideals excite our dissent.

George Eliot at one time thought differently. She sought to surround herself with individuals belonging to her school of ideas, her coterie of prejudices. She believed Cicero's saying, "Friendship is a perfect conformity of opinions." In later years she wrote: "I have had many heart-cutting experiences that opinions are a very poor cement for souls."

Underlying the desire to be with those who agree with us in opinion is apt to be a thick layer of selfish love and conceit. We like to see our minds reflected in other minds, as those who are vain of their physical appearance delight in their mirrors. Nobler, if not happier, are they who prefer to have their walls hung with portraits of other people rather than with looking-glasses.

Some of my most esteemed and helpful friends have been those with whom I have quarrelled,—let us hope only in an amiable way, as the old knights used to combat their brothers and neighbors in the tournament, and football players like to sprawl out their chums.

One such good comrade I picked up in travelling. He was an Englishman at a time when our international relations were a little strained; thickly English, with racial peculiarities exuding from every pore and dropping in "Lunnon" accents from his tongue, "Don't ye know?" He also be-

longed to that branch of the church with which I have the least sympathy, and religious antipathies are the hardest nuts to crack in free conversation.

My negative and I were stalled for the same voyage and journey. I felt at the prospect much as the fabled snake felt when he found himself sharing the den with a porcupine. This man was bristling with dogmatism, and had an unamiable way of sticking his quills out without provocation. I felt my fangs oiling up with acerbity, not to say with a little of the poison of theological rancor that even our most latitudinarian bigots must confess sometimes brews under their tongues. We fell to.

I soon observed that my comrade was a man minutely learned in the history of his own cult, and skillfully trained in the dialectics that support it. I learned much from him, not only relating to the subjects we discussed, but also that which gave me new conceptions of human nature, the many-sidedness of humanity, how you can cut as many facets in a mind as in a diamond and each facet will shine as if it were the whole thing.

I came gradually to enjoy my enforced companionship. I liked his sharp thrusts at my opinions even when they cut my skin. We became true sports; possibly of the windy, but not Thersites, sort. We wrangled by the hour on shipboard. We hurled jibes at each other as our horses stumbled over the rock-strewn fields of Syria. Our dragoon complained that our controversies were divid-

ing the Arab baggage-carriers into two hostile camps, as they favored the one or the other of us, according to our tips, doubtless, for they couldn't understand a word of what we were quarrelling about.

At a far eastern port our itineraries called for a parting of the ways. I grew lonesome in anticipation. What would I do without my daily exercise in armor? Late at night my Reverse Ego entered my room: "Say, you heretic, would you object if I changed my route and went with you?" I was surprised at this, for several birds of his feather were expected to join him on the other course.

So we resumed our campaign, the scenes of our journey furnishing opportune battle-fields. Turkey stirred our antagonism over Mahomet and the Koran. The sight of Greek temples revived in our breasts the controversies between Aristotelianism and modern thought. Rome made us furious with Risorgimento versus Vaticanism. We metaphorically drank blood out of each other's skulls—having previously split them. There was really nothing left worth fighting about, every bone of contention having been chewed up between us. We parted on returning to Italy.

I took the day train for Florence. I anticipated a lonesome time even in the Uffizi, where I knew that there were many things that might serve to whet our sword-points if —— had only come along with me. I dreamed of him that night. He looked like Goliath of Gath, and he was filling his

pockets with my pebbles from the brook, using up every one of them.

The next morning, to my delighted amazement, —— walked quickly into my hotel breakfast room and took his seat opposite me. He said apologetically, "I didn't know just what to do with myself after you went off; so I took the night train and came too." We chummed together again as affectionately as two boarding-school girls;—then disagreed about the English habit of having jam instead of griddle-cakes for breakfast.

I am persuaded that antagonism of opinions, where both parties mix their contention with a sweet reasonableness, is a healthful stimulant for good fellowship; that contrariety of tastes adds to the charm of intercourse, where—to borrow a metaphor from the inlayer's art—there is a substratum of courtesy so thick that the insets do not cut through nor break it. They lose immensely both in the enjoyment and profit of life who, instead of swinging wide open the doors of the heart that whoever will may enter, insist on cutting small holes adapted to their own size and shape, that those of unlike proportions may be excluded. I doubt if one can become really wise who does not debate with dissidents, or cultured without being rounded off by contact with those whose tastes are different from his own. Even our ideals may be corrected by knowing intimately the ideals of other persons as honest as ourselves, though they locate their stars in other parts of the heavens; just as

the place and size of literal stars have been accurately determined only by close observation of the attraction of other stars that belong, it may be, to different constellations.

I cannot understand how Nietzsche's love for Wagner could have rested, as a biographer suggests, upon his admiration of the musician's work or agreement with his philosophical speculations; nor how a change of political opinions produced the reaction of personal hatred. The play of passion was false, and must have been due to the conceit of the German superman, who loved nothing that he did not regard as a reflection of himself,—the beginning of the madness of egotism that brought him ultimately to the insane asylum.

### *Odd Friendships.*

I may further illustrate from my own experience the fact that difference of tastes, talents, opinions, conditions of life and even of imputed character, do not prevent real friendships.

When I recall Bill ——— I am tempted to pray, in the sentiment of the Pharisee, "I thank Thee, O God, that I am not as some other men—even Bill." But when I think over his whole career, his handicaps along the road of virtuous living, his fight with wild beasts of which we drawing-room saints know nothing, I wonder if really Bill did not far outclass the most of us in the opinion of the angels.

Bill's physiognomy was as strange as his life.

He had a finely intellectual forehead that made a fitting façade for the big, bald and glistening dome of thought that rose behind it. His eyes were beautiful in spite of what they had been accustomed to look out upon—as blue and soft as the sky over the Dead Sea. But his nose was sadly awry. It had been broken by the same blow of a policeman's club that had shattered his jaw.

I was introduced to Bill by another of my esteemed friends, an ex-convict who had founded a home for discharged prisoners.

“Bill's the best man that ever walked out of jail; as true steel as his jimmy used to be,” was Mike Dunn's comment.

Bill and I spent many a half-hour together, talking about prison reform, tramp life, safe-cracking, upper-crust hypocrites, namby-pamby philanthropists, the future life and where we would like to go when we got our tickets-of-leave. He one day asked me to loan him a book or two, to help him retrieve some of his lost years in an educational way. As I knew of no Sunday-school books quite virile enough to hold his attention, I took from the shelf Dickens' “*Oliver Twist*,” with Cruikshank's catchy illustrations. On returning the book Bill made this comment:

“The man what wrote that book was a hard 'un. Some repaired thief, eh?”

I defended the renowned novelist from this imputation.

Bill insisted: “He must 'a' been; for nobody but

a man who as a child had been put through the key-hole to unlock doors from the inside could 'a' writ it. I know, for I was brought up that way. Unless you've been the real thing you can't describe it, any more than you can guess the combination of a safe-door."

Bill then told me his life story. He never knew who his father was. Of his mother he retained only shadowy recollections,—shadowy in a double sense. There was a man who claimed to be his uncle, and played the prerogative of such relationship by "walloping" him whenever, as a child, he hesitated to pick a pocket, steal a key or purloin anything else that was convenient to the cracksmen's project. Bill showed such talent for his calling that while still in his early teens he was matriculated at the town jail; soon advanced to the penitentiary where he spent some years under the tuition of the ablest members of the profession who were similarly retained with pension allowance for board and lodgings from the State. He graduated with such honors that he was soon chosen to be the head of a select company of Plug Uglies. His reputation was country-wide when he was tried for a murder. From this charge he was acquitted on the failure of the evidence to prove beyond doubt that he had actually fired the fatal shot. It was while resisting arrest for this crime that he received the blow that disfigured his otherwise handsome face.

Bill confessed to me that his conscience was so

tender that he could not object to the twenty years' sentence for his part in the *mêlée*. "But," said he, stopping short in his narrative, "I oughtn't tell you these things. It won't hurt you, but it hurts me. You see when I remember what I was and what I did there comes on me a sort of craziness to go back and do them over again. It was all so exciting that just to think of it heats me up and sets me shaking like a locomotive engine gettin' up steam. Lying alone so much of the time in the prison it was the only recreation I had to imagine I was out again on the road. When wide-awake in the cell at night, when working all day eyes-front and tongue-tied making brooms or cracking stones, when doing the lock-step going to chapel and meals, I've planned more deviltry than I could handle in a double lifetime, even if I wasn't caught and interrupted in the jobs. It's thinking over past things, things that ought to be forgot, that's what helps most to damn a convict. You just tell that to your philanthropist friends."

"With your new purpose in life, Bill, I should imagine that thinking over the old things would only make you hate them."

"Well, it ain't so," he responded. "An old criminal's thoughts are like what the smell of whiskey is to a bum. He may shake his feet at the saloon door when he first swears off, but just as like enough he'll go back and drink if he gets into the smell of it."

"I'm sorry, Bill, that I lent you *Oliver Twist*."

"So am I," said he. "But you meant it all right, and I stood it for a while. Thank God and Mike Dunn that I've got some new and clean grit into me."

So we would talk. Bill taught me more psychology than I ever read in books, and more evangelical matter than was ever dropped on my head from a pulpit.

Six years later I received from the superintendent of a city mission a letter which said, "William —— is dead. All these years he lived among us as an humble, consistent Christian. He was a great inspiration to us all."

I am glad Bill and I were such good pals.

### *Descensus Averno.*

Bill's life is not a part of my own biography. Yet I am not so sure of that. It was like a strange scene alongside of a path. You cannot dissociate the scene from the way you have gone.

My life-path has led me down into what I may call æsthetic and moral lowlands. I will venture another incident. I drag it up from a deep, and, to my eye as a social economist, a bottomless abyss.

A horrible murder had been committed in a great western city where I was spending some weeks. A notorious yeggman of the worst type had been indicted for the crime. A gentleman who had gained great repute as a criminal lawyer was engaged for the defense. After studying the case he became convinced that the man, whatever other misdeeds

he may have been guilty of, was innocent of this particular act of fiendishness.

To do justice to his client it was necessary that he should meet certain persons who lived so far down in the lowest stratum of the "submerged tenth" that they seldom floated up even to the level of the streets in daylight. It was impossible to get these men to come to his office. They had a warranted fear of detectives if they should emerge from their burrows. The lawyer must go to them.

"An interesting job," I remarked. "Apt to be exciting."

"If you think so, come along with me," replied my friend. "To-night at eleven some plain clothes men from the police quarters will be at the corner of ——— Street, and will see me safe so long as they can see me at all; but when I plunge down into a hole they will not be responsible for me. So the Chief of Police warns me; but there will be no danger. They know me down there. I've saved the necks of some of that class. So I am *persona grata* to Lucifer, thanks to my unsavory reputation! There are some malodorous plants the scent of which becomes their protection from things that prey upon other plants. We criminal lawyers have that sort of immunity. If you can stand me you had better come along."

It was late at night. We went down ——— Street; entered a small cigar shop where some cryptic words with a man behind the counter induced him to let us out through a back-door into

an unlighted yard. Across this a door opened into a dark passageway. Having threaded this we stood suddenly in a brilliantly lighted hall.

This transformation scene suggested that we had been transported through both time and space; that this was one of the veritable Arabian Nights, and that Chicago had become Bagdad. The illusion was, however, spoiled by the furniture of the place, which consisted chiefly of card and roulette tables.

My friend called my attention to one of the most intent card-players; a gentleman whom the people that voted for him imagined to have his seat under the dome of our State Capitol, surrounded by statues of Justice and Liberty, and commemorative of the great and good Americans who had sacrificed themselves on the altar of their country.

I expressed to my companion my surprise that he should come to so elegant a haunt of vice to seek the peculiar quarry he had described to me.

"You can never tell," he replied, "since the frogs from the Nile once came up into Pharaoh's bathtub."

He spoke for a moment with a low-browed, corrugate-faced, but elegantly dressed man. "That fellow," said he afterward, "is a sort of rat in the sewer connection between the high and low life of the city. I have gotten from him the tip I needed. Come!"

Half a block away we made a deeper *descensus Averno*, and landed in a small room packed to

suffocation with negroes. The black mass fairly writhed about a table where one threw the dice on which they risked their dimes and quarters. From their eagerness one might have thought that they were trying to rescue one of their number from a sunken mine.

Here my friend got another clue, a dirty one indeed, which dropped us even lower down the social ladder. I cannot soil the white paper on which I am writing by attempting to describe the scene we next witnessed. I have threaded my way through a back alley in Cairo on a torrid night, when a yard of clothing sufficed for a score of human beings; but here, with a Christian church clock striking the hour, and with the "finest" policemen in the world beating time on the adjacent sidewalk, I assure you that other scene in the oriental Tophet was utterly outclassed in indecency. For any similitude I must borrow Virgil's description of the Harpies: "Fowls with virgin faces, most loathsome . . . hands hooked, and faces pale."

"Do you see that beast over yonder?" asked my guide. "She was once a somewhat noted singer. I have heard her in opera. Later she was the town sensation in vaudeville. Now —— Well! a few more maniacal shrieks, and they will bury her in the Potter's Field."

I protested against any further prospecting through Inferno.

"But you couldn't get home from here alone. I'll make only one more search."

We next entered a low saloon at the dark end of a filth-reeking alley. We were stopped at the entrance by a woman the hardness and ill-balance of whose features suggested the fabled portress of hell. A few cabalistic words opened the way for us into a back room, where there sat around a beer-soaked table four or five bullet-headed men. As we entered they rose quickly to their feet as if to repel any invasion of their den.

"It's all right, Jacks," barked the woman who had followed us. "It's only ——," giving the name of my friend.

I saw that I was not wanted among these friends in council, and accepted the invitation of the she monster to sit in the anteroom.

Had it not been for the diabolical novelty of the situation I should have deserted my comrade, and risked being bludgeoned at the door-sill. But that woman's ugliness fascinated me, very much as I was once held by the filthy mud geyser in the Yellowstone. It seemed to me that I had drifted back through the geological ages, and had encountered one of the beasts just endowed with human reason. I had always been interested in palæontological studies, so I stuck it out for a half-hour until my friend reappeared. But those thirty minutes moved slowly, and they have left a very sore spot in my memory.

Since that night humanity has widened its ranges, and has been to me a more complicated, involved problem than I had dreamed of before.

Saintly men and women sprouting wings to fly heavenward and this vile stuff crawling out of primeval human mud belong to the same race! I professed belief in Christianity which proposed to lift the lowest into the highest form of the species. Could I believe it? I had to think of Bill in order to rescue my faith.

My legal friend said to me as we returned home, "I have learned enough to-night to prove an alibi for my client. But unfortunately I couldn't induce one of those fellows to appear as a witness. If he did his character is such that his testimony would not be believed by any jury. Besides, this crowd couldn't exonerate my client except by damning themselves as the real perpetrators of the crime. Now what would you do if in my place?"

I could give him no advice. His wisdom or shrewdness stood him in good stead; for later he so managed the case without revealing his informants that the guilt of his client was regarded by the jury as not sufficiently proven.

On parting with me the lawyer said, "You know that I have been offered the nomination for District Attorney. I have two reasons for not taking it. First, my life wouldn't be worth a candle flame if I should ever have to prosecute any of this gang, since they have once given me their confidence; for what they have told me they regard as sacredly safe as if they had told it at a priest's confessional. Secondly, I could not do it honorably. There is 'honor among thieves,' and there ought to be

honor among criminal lawyers. What do you think?"

I have been thinking ever since.

*Beneath the Skin.*

My life, having been one of a semi-public character, has brought me into contact and some familiarity with men distinguished for presumed attainments in the various arts and professions or for leadership in popular enterprises. My recollection of some of them—I trust that I am not unduly depreciatory—leaves me surprised at their repute, and also at the gullibility of the general public.

Many a flash of genius is like a gleam of gold in a pile of dirt. It attracts the attention of those who are out prospecting for celebrities, as are all newspaper reporters. A happy, almost accidental, turn of tact is interpreted as astuteness. Something that happens to catch the popular sentiment at the moment, a speech, a book, a poem, brings repute, as the invention of the "return ball" playing and the concocting of chewing gum are said to have been rewarded by fortunes.

I was thrown much with a gentleman who had attained a considerable notoriety as a mirth-breeder on the platform. In ordinary conversation he was utterly juiceless. He carefully conserved every particle of soul moisture that percolated through his rather arid nature, and sold it to the public who grinned their delight at fifty cents a head.

I have known certain preachers who had a marvellous knack of "putting things" to a congregation, but whose opinion on any subject that required sound practical judgment, theological, social, philanthropic, scientific, moral or even domestic—for this I have their wives' testimony—was utterly negligible.

A somewhat noted publicist once boasted to me that he had never been guilty of advancing a new idea. From many conversations with him I am led to believe that he was sincere and correct in this judgment. He read omnivorously upon popular topics—politics, science, literature, it mattered not what might be uppermost in the public mind—and, having a knack at condensation together with an easy rhetoric, he passed as a prospector in many fields.

Some popular books on science have been written by men who would never have been trusted with a test-tube in the laboratory, who from personal inspection would scarcely distinguish a stratum of sand-stone of the Palæologic Age from the concrete floor of an abandoned factory, and whose knowledge of the stars was limited to their own reflections from the printed page.

"Tell me," said a tourist with note-book and camera in Northern Italy, "is Italy a Republic or a Kingdom?" Yet this man was "doing" that part of the Peninsula for an American periodical.

In public movements flag-carrying is often taken

for real leadership. Or it may be that circumstances, as in a football game, have thrust a very ordinary individual, as it were, through a break in the opposing line, and he seems to the crowd to have been the directing hero of the whole combat.

In politics this is not uncommonly so. If a certain party has the majority of votes in a district it will constitute a tide that will float almost any sort of driftwood to success. One is depressed with this fact if he has had much to do with the common run of Aldermen, Assemblymen and Congressmen; and the soul of the patriot is not fully cheered by close acquaintance with some of our Governors and Senators.

I have interested myself during many years in watching the development of some of our "leaders." The Honorable Sam ——— will serve me for a specimen of the tribe.

Too lazy to study, Sam was enabled to enter college by the need of the college treasurer for tuition fees. He was allowed to graduate *cum laude* because the class roll for that year showed a diminution in numbers. He studied law because the ex-judge in whose office he "read" was an aspirant for political preferment, and needed the influence of Sam's father. From contact with the judge and the frequenters of the office Sam acquired the itch for politics. Blackstone was too dry for him, while Tom, Dick and Harry, each with a vote in his pocket, were very interesting. If he knew little about the statesmen of the world, Sam did become

almost an expert biographer of the electors of his ward. His proficiency in the study of foreign affairs was shown chiefly in his helpfulness toward certain aliens whom he induced to become American citizens within five years of their landing in the United States, and whose patriotism he stimulated by assisting them to prepare their first ballots.

A dead-lock having occurred between two factions in his party, both united upon Sam as a "dark horse," whereupon he rode triumphantly into the mayoralty of his city, which had just emerged from village short clothes into municipal manhood. By judicious distribution of patronage between two factions he united his own party, and by orating a few platitudes about reform he won over some disgruntles from the opposite party, and was projected into a State Senatorship. Here his career was threatened because his ignorance of practical affairs disqualified him for committee work, and his lack of usefulness in the Senate failed to attract to him the attention of the outside lobbyists who were looking for men capable of rolling their logs into the stream of legislation.

Sam must change his field. Then why not seek a wider, rather than a narrower, one? He spent several evenings studying up national history. He read a number of good articles on Jefferson and the Federalists, a handbook on the Constitution, a few speeches of Webster and Lincoln. He was able to lard his natural oratorical glibness with quota-

tions from the Fathers of the Republic; made a fair Fourth of July address; was nominated and elected to Congress. Here he voted right on the Tariff; got leave to print in the *Record* an unuttered speech which he franked by the thousands to his constituents, some of whom recognized generous unacknowledged quotations from letters they had written him. He might have been returned to his seat in the council of the nation were it not that he made a wrong guess as to the faction which would control the party primary.

Sam has occupied his recent leisure in compiling a patchwork biography of himself, made up of various press notices of the "Young Gladstone of America."

This illustration of how some of our public men are made suggests an incident which will reveal the secret of the failure of some of our ablest men to reach responsible positions. Among my neighbors was a brilliant young lawyer. He had inherited his talent from a remarkable family well known in the land. His reputation for character gave weight to his recognized ability. The times were out of joint. The "submerged tenth" was oozing upward and had almost gotten the control of the community. It was the time for some young Hercules to cleanse the Augean stable. Who better qualified than my friend? He was eloquent and resourceful; he must lead. His nomination was settled upon.

He refused to heed the popular call. We knew that he was ambitious, and the golden stairway was

revealed right before him. We knew his high ideal of community service, and appealed straight to his conscience. But without avail. He listened. Now and then his eyes glistened as if his soul were putting on armor for the good fight; then he shook his head,—“Gentlemen, it is impossible!” We watched him walk the floor, and each time he turned expected a favorable reply, but none came. The case involved some mystery, for he made no counter argument to our solicitations.

When the others had gone, he turned suddenly to me, sat down by my side, and burst into tears. He then told me the reason for his refusal.

“I could not open my heart to the others, but, as you have been my own friend and my father’s friend, I am going to ask you to let me crawl into your heart in confidence. No man knows the agony which my refusal costs me. It is not because I do not care for public office or have no interest in the reform of affairs; but I am absolutely unfit for office. Until this moment no one but God and myself has known that I am the victim of a chronic temptation that will one day ruin my reputation as it has already ruined my peace. When that day comes I shall slink away and lose myself in the unknown crowd that I now despise. I will creep away through the big shadow that hangs over all life. I dare not enlarge my personality by taking a public position. If you knew all, you would be the last to ask me. If I fall, I fall alone. That much I owe to my fellow-men. That you think I

have ability only cuts me the deeper. I am like a captain who knows that he has a rotten ship in which he dares not sail. I must have no responsibility except to myself."

A little while later we buried this man. A mean worm that no one else saw had felled the grand oak.

I wonder if this is not the secret of our disappointment in many of our young men. Sometimes the vice that slays has not really poisoned the blood and brought the physical disaster, but is as yet only a habit of mind, absorbing the time that might be given to better thinking, choking the growth of wise opinions, clogging the balance of the finer judgment, and stifling with its fetid air the purity of the soul's breathing. But often, as in the case narrated, the self-knowledge of the secret propensity makes the man a moral coward. He would feel hypocritical if he should prate in public about the virtue he is conscious of not possessing. Thus the very remnant of his virtue, his self-consistency, paralyzes his moral action. With highest ideals, strongest incentives, conscious ability and all circumstances moving him toward success like a tide, the man is an imbecile.

I must give a foil to the bad impression made by these incidents by letting the reader see through my memory a very different public character. Mr. ——— was very prominent in the legal profession, and well known for his advocacy of good government. He was offered a nomination to Congress, but declined it, as he said to me, "Because I would

be too much beholden to certain men whom I do not believe in, but who are pushing my nomination. I would not be free."

A few years later this gentleman was elected Governor of one of our States. The bee for other similar advancement got "into his bonnet." The United States Senatorship was offered him by the engineers of the party machine. At the same time they had put through the Legislature a partisan bill which was waiting for his signature.

A mutual friend told me of this scene. "It was late at night. We had talked for some time over political affairs. Picking up the bill the Governor said, 'I ought not to sign that.' I replied, 'But, Governor, you know the consequences of a refusal.' For a long time neither of us spoke. The Governor took long walks up and down the room. He then sat down at the table; read and reread various passages of the document; asked a question or two about their significance; leaned his head upon his hands. I watched his face. The man was having a struggle. His countenance was eloquent with the combat that was being waged behind its muscles. At length he brought his big hand down upon the paper, and with set jaw muttered as if to himself and oblivious of my presence, 'I will not sign it. It would make a bad precedent for future legislation. I prefer to take the consequences of the refusal.'"

The Governor took the consequences, and has been out of politics ever since. He was never

cognizant of the fact that I knew of that scene. But one day we were talking of Mr. Lincoln:

“Governor, what in your mind was the supreme moment in Lincoln’s life?”

He replied as calmly as if the question had been one in which he had no especial personal interest:

“When, in his debate with Mr. Douglas, he deliberately sacrificed his prospect of being sent to the Senate rather than abate one jot from his pronounced free-soil principles.”

“But,” I replied, “the people remembered that unselfish act of Mr. Lincoln, and it ultimately won him the Presidency.”

“True,” said the Governor, “but Lincoln didn’t know what was to follow. He made his choice in utter disinterestedness, willingly sacrificing all personal ambition for a principle. I have often thought of that act of self-immolation as marking the high water-mark, not, perhaps in his public career, but certainly in the development of his character. And character is more than career.”

Many men have paraded in the stolen toga of Abraham Lincoln. I have here told of this one man to whom the great martyr seems to have lent his mantle.

I could illustrate the haphazard of reputation from the characters of some of my acquaintances who were reputed to be philanthropists. I recall one gentleman who, I am sure, never looked intentionally, inquiringly, sympathetically into the dis-

tressed face of a fellow-man. More than one home was broken up by his cruel exaction of the pound of flesh in the way of mortgage interest and rent. His chief renown while living was for the shrewdness with which he wrecked a certain railroad corporation. But after his death he was canonized—by the newspapers—as a saint after the order of Joseph of Arimathea.

I may tell how this came about as it was told me by his legal adviser, a man of very similar character who had engineered some of his client's skin-flint projects, and was not even ashamed to boast of the part he had taken in revamping his reputation.

“You know that old ——, though he never shadowed a church door and was always blaspheming against preachers, was all the while awfully afraid of dying. When the doctors gave him a hint that it was all up with him, he talked to me as if I were his priest, and could help him out of the devil's clutches, as I had on more than one occasion helped him out of the clutches of more visible adversaries.

“You know,” continued my informant, “I go to the —— Church; at least that is where I pay for the pew my wife sits in when her mirror prods her conscience on a Sunday morning. Now I really wanted to solace the old man, and suggested that, as he had no relatives to dispute his will, he ought to make a donation to our church, which was just then trying to raise money for a new edifice. Jokingly I told him about the played-out de-

bauchees, condottieri and others of that kidney who had endowed altars and got their names carved on cathedral walls. I don't believe that he really thought there would be any virtue in imitating these worthy examples, but he was never a man to take a risk if he could 'hedge himself.' Hence his *post-humus* philanthropy, that 'Splendid Bequest,' that 'Spontaneous Effusion of a Great Heart' referred to in his obituary notices."

I would not leave the impression that this sort of philanthropist or this sort of legal adviser was typical of my generation. Fleas are somewhat natural to dogs. Perhaps I had better give a few contrasting pictures just to save my repute for having been at all associated with either of the above-mentioned gentlemen.

I was walking with a friend who had recently lost a member of his family to whom he had been tenderly attached. We were speaking of memorial monuments. I quoted an Arab tradition that Mahomet was once approached by a man who said, "O Prophet, my mother is dead. What shall I do to commemorate her virtues?" "Dig a well," replied the Prophet. That is probably the suggestion of the many trickling streams one sees in Moslem cemeteries.

A few days later my friend said to me, "I am going to dig a well! I will make an annex to our hospital, and endow it. I think ———, who was so loving to everybody, would like that better than anything in ostentatious marble."

I have been permitted in my long life to see many such streams trickling from wells that are deep in human hearts, and sending refreshing waters through the deserts of suffering. Many men and women have I known "of whom the world is not worthy," and of whom, in the inscrutable methods of Divine Providence, the world has never heard.

One of the most beautiful local charities, now in its semi-centennial existence, owes its start, not to any well-known benefactress or association, but to a poor little crippled child whom I often found working with her aching fingers to relieve the woes of her class, until at length others with pecuniary means and leisure were hypnotized by her example and followed it.

I was very fond of Mr. ———. He was far gone with consumption, yet in order to feed his body while it lasted he was obliged to work ten hours a day in a factory. I interested myself to find some restful recreation for his evenings, but he had found for himself a satisfactory way of occupying his leisure hours. Leisure! With racking cough and blood-spitting! Until after midnight he would be upon the street, seeking out some over-tempted fellow-workman. Out of his meagre savings he provided a "rescue camp" in the slums, and there organized a life-saving corps of men whom he inspired with the spirit of his own helpfulness.

The men at the factory took a day off for his funeral. But the newspapers, that made full notice of every foible of society, every slip of

ignorant virtue, every mistake of the best intentioned goodness, never discovered that this man had lived and died.

“God knows His own.” I am grateful that He let me know some of them too.

## XII

### RETIREMENT

*A Mistake for Many.*

WHEN—to talk in Dantesque style—I was midway the circle of my seventh decade I realized the wisdom in the lines which the poet puts into the mouth of Guido da Montefeltro describing that period of life:

“ Quando mi vidi giunto in quella parte  
Di mia età, ove ciascun dovrebbe  
Calar le vele e raccogliere le sarte.”

I, too, had reached the time of life when “everybody ought to lower sail and coil up the ropes.” That is, I proposed to retire from the rush of professional life.

There were, however, about me some warnings against such a policy. Among my age-limping contemporaries were those who had discovered that men are not like bears, which hibernate safely and snugly when the chill gets into their blood.

Some confessed that in their anticipated *otium cum dignitate* they found neither dignity nor ease. As for dignity, having shown a disposition to drop the world, the world reciprocated the slight by

dropping them. This might have been expected, for mutual service is ever the bond of mutual respect. The world has so many hurts that it ignores any one who does not carry with him a little court-plaster, or have a sunshiny face for its sanitation. We must not seek to retire within ourselves, but to get closer to kindred humanity. We should use our freedom from other cares to cultivate

“A heart at leisure from itself  
To soothe and sympathize.”

I felt greatly complimented the other day when a ragged urchin of some four years held me up on the sidewalk with, “Say, mister, won’t you fix my wagon? It’s done got broke.” I thanked the child for asking me. He forgot to thank me, in his eager delight that his wagon worked again. But his glee was better than any words. It is good to have even the dumb brutes neigh or bark or purr at you. Charles Kingsley could never have grown old with this sentiment:

“Do the work that’s nearest,  
Though it’s dull at whiles,  
Helping when you meet them  
Lame dogs over stiles.”

As for the comforts of retirement: having brought with themselves into their social retreats the habits of restless activity induced by their past lives, many discover more aches than easements in trying to sit still. There are those who have made enough

money to "blow themselves" into any luxury, and yet feel as Lord Byron says that Childe Harold did:

"With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe,  
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades  
below."

A lawyer of my acquaintance, affected by what he imagined to be the hook-worm of weariness with the routine of his profession, retired from court and office, but frequently caught himself at night arguing a case before His Honor the bedpost.

Once when voyaging through Sicilian seas I was struck with the sombre and discontented look on the face of a fellow passenger. I hesitated to address him, feeling that he might be a willing prisoner to his own thought, nursing some bitter memory, or pondering some problem too weighty for lesser minds to appreciate. Feeling somewhat chatty I at length accosted him. Instead of resenting the intrusion he welcomed it. Learning that I was travelling alone he almost embraced me.

"It will be a godsend, sir, if you will let me walk and talk with you on shipboard. I'm alone too; and the feeling of it almost literally puts me 'between the Devil and the deep sea.' I'm not a murderer nor a thief, but neither of those individuals could be a worse comrade than I am to myself."

I learned that the man had been a prosperous cotton-broker in New Orleans. Having amassed an independent fortune he determined to become an independent liver, see the world, sip its pleasures,

and get rid of all its detailed obligations. He had marked out for himself a two years' itinerary *de luxe*. He was now only in the second month of his anticipated Paradise, but was already wearied with the monotony of incessantly seeing something new. He was as restless to get home to the flats, the levees, the torrid streets and stuffy offices of New Orleans as a horse is to get back to his stable after the shortest drive. For his accustomed crib among the cotton bales, the pawing of the trade hoofs of his business associates on the floor of the Exchange, he was ready to give up the snowy sides of Etna, the opalescent waters of the Ionian Sea, and all the gods of Olympus.

The reason for this ennui in the most entrancing spot on the globe was that his mind had been untrained to anything except his special business. He had never communed with the Homeric deities whose names are perpetuated on headland and isle; never felt the touch of the sublime in nature; was not familiar with history or art; and knew too little of the things that tourists seek even to converse interestedly with his fellow voyagers. But he was a "successful man," and no doubt had provided for a monument in the cemetery which should perpetuate his local celebrity as a prominent citizen and an example to the ambitious young men of the coming generation.

But lack of culture is not the only drawback to contented retirement. Among my acquaintances was a lady who had been a noted cantatrice on two

continents. Almost from girlhood she had been the favorite of courts and crowds. Impresarios had bid high for her voice to augment their gains, and the gems of princes loaded her toilet-table. This world-songstress had scarcely reached middle life when some wicked bacterial imp of darkness, having no discernment in his work, preyed upon those rarest of vocal cords. She retired from the stage and the lime-light. The remainder of her life was spent in bitter-sweet reminiscence of what she had once been. She was no longer a life, but only a memory. She had many other gifts of talent and disposition which would have made her a popular leader in almost any circle had she been inclined to enter it, but she buried herself in her past, and was apparently more depressed with the weight of the pall than cheered by its spangles.

I am convinced from both observation and experience that, unless one has some other resource of satisfaction than those provided by business, profession, or the passing incidents of active life, the lure of retirement will prove, as Hudibras puts it:

“An ignis fatuus that bewitches  
And leads men into pools and ditches.”

My own case I conceived would be different since my real interests in life had been those of a general student of affairs rather than in the detailed routine of a practitioner of my special calling.

I could spend my time in reading. For this I had a voracious appetite, and my shelves were full of uncut leaves which I would consume with the delight of a silkworm on a mulberry tree. Or, if the impulse should seize me—as no doubt it would, for I was somewhat of a crank for controversy—I could write; and, as I had not made myself altogether objectionable with publishers and journalists, my pen splutterings might be reduced to print. Or, if occasion should call for it, I could go to the platform and orate upon the vital topics of the day. And then, if through failure of the flesh or failure of the public to listen, this were denied to me, I could at least adopt the rôle of a dilettante philosopher, sit on the fence, and amuse myself in criticizing the passing throng of humanity. Beside all these I had some hobbies I could ride, and thus make my own merry-go-round divertissements in the side-show of existence.

Other considerations helped my resolution to slip off the yoke. For instance, I found that anything like mere personal success had become suddenly demagnetized as an incentive. Ambition for secular gain had played itself out. My children were grown and doing for themselves, so there was no longer need that I work for their support, and my savings were enough to keep the marrow in my bones.

I now realized, what I had scarcely thought of formerly, that love and anxiety for those dearest to us furnish a large part of the stimulus of endeavor. If the world by some new ordering of nature should

be peopled with bachelors, even though they were endowed with limitless longevity, most human enterprises would fail. Genius, like Thoreau, would be tempted to slip away into a cabin in the woods. Dull greed would doze in slippered ease;—that is, if there were left in men, without the altruism of family love, enough grit to build fireplaces and buy slippers.

The same is largely true of the desire for repute, especially for applause. Unless renown echoes in other ears close to our own, it at length becomes empty clatter.

I once watched a noted orator whose wife and a few intimate friends were in his audience. At every burst of applause he turned toward the little group, and caught new inspiration from their gratification. I recall one of the most stage-hardened prima donnas, in answering the calls before the curtain, having bowed right and left and forward, made her hand-kiss to her mother who sat in a specially reserved seat. I think of Pope's dictum only to question it:

“Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul.”

In my own case—and I make no plea of modesty—the glamour of mere repute faded like October leaves with advancing years and lessening loves. The esteem of the few who lived in my heart became more to me than any commendation of strangers, however many or notable.

And how rapidly strangers were taking the place

of familiars as the years did their inevitable work! To seek goodly reports from the outside, as I confess I had done in earlier life, was now positively distasteful. My scrap-book of passing memorials was utterly neglected, and most of the earlier pages found their place in the fire, notwithstanding that a remnant of juvenile vanity would now and then tickle me, if it was touched in exactly the right spot—the mind's funny-bone—by some even trifling success. My old dog and I are alike. He will still raise one ear and wag his tail when patted, though he shows by the brevity of the spasm that he would rather be left alone.

I must mention the failure of another incentive to continued activity. The one closest to me had passed away. For forty years she had been like one lobe of my brain as well as of my heart. We had shared each other's thoughts. Except when it was in purely extemporaneous form she knew beforehand what I would say in public, every subject upon which I was working, every case of interest. She was my gentlest, but severest, critic, for she erased my errors by wisely correcting my own logic, and made my own conscience—which had practically become her conscience—show me my faults. Hers was not so much an associated mind as it was an inner mind, that seemed to look out from some deeper centre of my own soul, and discern more clearly than I saw myself what I meant, or at least what I ought to mean. The bond that united us was more than love; it was unreserved friendship.

I am aware that some will think I have reversed these terms from their proper sequence; but others will appreciate the expression as it stands.

As the knight in the tournament measured his strokes, ever conscious of the glance of his ladye faire, so I was never able to divest myself of the sentiment of chivalric obedience. I laid every trophy at my wife's feet, and in her look I read consolation for every failure. When, therefore, she passed beyond she took with her through the cloud-gates the better part of myself. What was left was emptied of its accustomed incentives, as the flavor escapes when the box that holds the ointment is broken.

*The New Liberty.*

I, therefore, cut the cords of professional obligations, except in cases where long professional experience might enable me to render such service as could not be equally well rendered by others.

With retirement from routine obligations began, except for sorrowful reminiscences, the most contented part of my life. No one was master of my time or thoughts; and if only I could have self-control, and did not forget my own ideals, I could put my best elements into the dictator's chair. But alas, that "if"! How often it has proved revolutionary and overturned personal self-government!

The best thing about my new liberty from the professional race-track was that it allowed me breathing spells, in which I could cool off inordinate im-

pulses, check over-hasty purposes, and take daily doses of "sober second thoughts." I could now make engagements with myself—the most important individual to deal with, and the one who gives us most trouble if we don't live up to our contracts. I said, "I need now advocate nothing that does not appeal to my deepest convictions; need follow no coterie or crowd because of the bonds of association; need fear no one's opposition; can change my views about things in the waters above or the earth beneath without involving my party or my church in any mistake I may make."

I appreciate this phase of personal liberty, especially as I read over again a letter received during the war. The writer is a clergyman belonging to one of the State churches of Europe. He has lost his faith, not in Christianity, but in some tenets peculiar to the ecclesiastical institution with which he is identified. To announce at once publicly his change of views would cost him his present position as an army chaplain, in which he is very useful, ministering to the wounded and bereaved in the terrible war. He writes to me, for he must tell somebody of the deep currents struggling in his soul; and I am across the seas, so that he may speak in a confidence he might not wisely show toward any one in his home parish. It is not with him a question of obedience to his church. That he could settle instantly by open dissent, taking the consequences as every man has a right to do. But unfortunately his conflict is between two great and

solemn duties,—duty of honor to himself as an honest thinker, and duty of love to hundreds of the mangled boys on the battle-field, whom he will be permitted to serve only in his chaplain's uniform.

Many a clergyman feels a similar antagonism between his usefulness and the details of a narrow creed or the martinet control of little ecclesiastics. Many a lawyer feels the conflict between his sense of absolute right and some particular duty to a client. Many a statesman feels it between his opportunity to practically serve his country only through party agency and his conviction that his party is wrong in some of its shibboleths. No man in any sort of public life can escape at times the feeling of inconsistency.

“Consistency is a jewel.” But sometimes inconsistency will cash for more real truth, more reasonableness and more virtue at the bank of the soul, and doubtless also on the account books of Heaven.

I congratulated myself also in that, without harming others, I could now break with some of my past notions; go squarely back on some former cock-sure declarations; realize that I didn't know a lot of things I once thought I knew. There is a wonderful exhilaration in standing at the opening of vistas from which one has been previously barred by conventional preoccupations and engagements.

Best of all I was free from myself. Like a moving river I could slip by my banks, and need not stagnate at the old water-holes. Siegfried couldn't weld securely the parts of his broken sword. He

must grind it up and recast its particles into a new blade. Our moral and mental metal must at times be similarly treated.

I bow my head here and say a prayer,—God grant that I may not inadvertently think a bit of the broken blade to be the whole new sword, and become an opinionated, cranky old man, presuming to

“Teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—  
Then drop into myself—and be a fool.”

### *Sailing Away.*

A man who has been active for years and tries to retire is like a fly in a spider's web. The threads are strong and exceedingly gluey. But, having broken through, I took to the wing—or, to speak literally, I took ship and sailed away.

New associations help one to pull himself out of his old self. The air of Europe affects an occupation-stifled American very much as a seventh summer air makes a locust break his shell. That is an argument for giving our college professors at least a Sabbatical rest outside their habitual environment.

Much of the advantage of travelling is that one is generally *incog*. As nobody knows or cares who you are you can't talk shop. I once made a day's inland voyage with a distinguished prelate. His garb gave him away. Every one who approached him conversed about the good man's diocese or his books, or sawed at the old knots of denominational controversy. He couldn't get outside of his pro-

fessional burrow if he tried. I pitied His Reverence in spite of his big gold cross and knee-breeches.

Let me say in parenthesis that I believe that clerical garb, whatever compensating advantages it may give, lessens a clergyman's knowledge of fellow humanity. Courtesy to the cloth leads most men to treat ministers as they would treat women,—the seamy side of life not shown them. Yet on that seamy side will be discovered the most essential things in the making of human nature, things which a preacher especially ought to know.

The same is measurably true of men who are well known as political leaders. Others, aware of their opinions and ambitions, hesitate to antagonize them in conversation. Hence, as a rule, our big politicians are the most ignorant of what is moving the brains of the multitude.

One does not fully know oneself until he has consorted with many varieties of the *genus homo*, as one does not know the geography of his own country until he has "bounded" it. Seeing foreign lands rubs out one's American provincialism, and rubs off those national conceits that other nations call prickly. It is good to take object-lessons in the fact that we are not the most scholarly, scientific, philosophical, free-minded, self-respecting, decent-lived, courteous, saintly, common-sense people in the world. We are a new branch on the old tree of humanity, and haven't yet come to much more than the twig stage.

It is especially good for an evangelical Protestant

to discover that priests and ex-priests, orthodox and those who call themselves doubters, may be equally religious and lovable, as one learns on long voyages with them or in being shipwrecked together with them on the otherwise socially barren island of a foreign hotel. The only men worth despising are bigots, those who, with God's great headlands rising everywhere about them, can reach no higher standpoint of observation than the tips of their own noses. Some of my most profitable acquaintances abroad have been monseigneurs and Methodists, monks and masons, boots and barons, prima donnas and pension keepers, archæologists and dump-diggers, linguists who interest one with their erudition not more than do the peasants with their patois. It is good to realize, because it is true, that you are only a tiny splinter of the monolithic mountain called Man, and that you ought to care little if, while civilization is tunnelling its way, you have had a spark struck out from your personality or not to attract the eyes of others.

*Drifting With the Ages.*

A great delight while residing abroad has been to reread what I thought to be familiar history on the spots where the events occurred. I soon discovered that, while my memory had retained most of the facts, I had previously caught from the written page as little of its spirit as a landsman who only looks at a "painted ship on a painted ocean" gets from it the soul of the sea.

For instance, when one sits on the stone seats of the theatre at Syracuse in Sicily and knows that they were once occupied by men and women who lived and died long before Christianity, one feels kinship with the scarcely shirted rustics whom Theocritus made immortal as his heroes. The ages seem to become cemented together into solidarity when one is in the Arena at Verona, trying to re-people it with the old Roman crowds, while a regiment of Italian Bersaglieri dashes by at double-quick. To spend Saturday among the Druid stones of Cheswick and Sunday in a Presbyterian conventicle in Edinburgh is good for a theologian, unless he be a fool. It is well for a stickler for forms and orders to stand bestride a hole in a slab and recall the fact that down through that hole once ran the blood of a bull, and fell upon the head of a priest being ordained to the service of Mithra. Meditation about the Normans while loitering on Pont Neuf in Paris, followed by a stroll around the Tuileries and a night at the Grand Opera House, mixes one's gray matter into better substance.

Such things make one feel kinship with multitudinous humanity. It takes away one's conceit, individual, national and racial, to see that human nature is ever the same; to realize that, to one looking down from the heights of time, the changing customs of human generations would no more break the monotony of the real scene than the changes in an ant-hill when studied by us.

Now this is humiliating. It makes one feel like

crying with Elijah, "Take away my life; I am no better than my fathers!"

Then comes the reaction. One feels the greatness of one's own humanity, as something infinitely beyond individuality environed with local limitations. The traveller fills his chest with the atmosphere of the Ages and says, "*We* built the Pyramids. *We* discovered the stars and the Poles. *We* built empires; shook the earth with our wars and reëstablished the foundations of a better civilization." Except God, "in whom we live and move and have our being," there is nothing so splendid as a man. An autumn leaf, if it had appreciation, would not whistle a tiny dirge in falling, but, like a banner lowered at nightfall, it would salute with its fluttering beauty the glory of which it had been a part.

### XIII

#### BUNGALOW DAYS

**O**N my return home after long sojourns abroad, to gently assure myself that I had really retired from the world and its vanities, I imitated other ascetics, and built me a cell, at least a lodge, in the wilderness. The spot selected was, when seen from its own immediate standpoint, utterly lost in a trackless forest; but, when bounded by the rest of creation, it was just within the edge of the woods; so that, if I could hear the whoop of the owl in the twilight, the grunting of the ground-hog at noonday, or the morning calls of the birds that sing their matins to the sun, I could also hear the rumble of a passing auto, the halloo of a chummy neighbor, and the dinner call from the family house.

I have learned from some attempts at it that too deep a solitude is not conducive to the best mental activity. It may help one to sink the lead of meditation deeper into the mud of one's imagined experience, but I doubt if it clarifies the depths. Possibly I am too stupid to be left alone, and need the prodding of suggestions from without. Quiet affects me as a belt of calm affects a sail. Some minds are like motor-boats; they carry their own

propulsive power—John the Baptist and John Burroughs, for instance—but we ordinary men need external stimulus.

I find that the white and black page of a book, the fly-tracks of the greatest mind that has crawled over it, are apt to be without inspiration. There is needed close at hand the soul-glow of a thoughtful face, the emphasis of the living voice, the response of the quick repartee or the kindly debate to keep one fully alert. That “nest in the wilderness” may be a good thing for moulting doves, but is the last place for a man to fly to unless he is pursued by the sheriff.

My exclusive bit of the universe was, therefore, just within the primeval forest. So I judged it to be from the inextricable tangle of underbrush, the interlacing of trees overhead, and the dense “contiguity of shade” all round. Scarcely a foot had penetrated so far, unless it were hoofed like a deer’s foot or moccasined like that of a wildcat. Here and there was a gnarled and seraggy apple-tree, with fruit too hard and knotted to allow the sunshine to sweeten and ripen it. Was it an aboriginal relic of wild growth or the degenerate scion of a planted orchard? The oldest inhabitant could not decide. Yonder was the ruin of an ancient wall of stones. But this led no whither, and may have marked the disappointment of some settler of long ago in finding the ground inhospitable to the plow. Great boulders scattered about might be the monolithic monuments of the victory of original nature

over the assaults of civilization. Giant pines, resting in the deep beds of their own needles, seemed to be dreaming of unknown centuries. Ferns stood high above the heaps of black mould and inter-twisted roots, like the coral flowers in the reefs built upon their own dead generations. Wild flowers were in such profusion and such varieties that surely no botanist had ever tried to set them in scientific array.

So, though not far from the world of humanity, I went far "back to Nature's heart" for my bungalow. I was attracted to the exact site by a little opening in the thicket that showed to the west,—like my years. A wide valley, then a ridge of hills that shut out the finality of sunset, fascinated me because it was so much like the mystery that obscures the life horizon, however bright it may be with faith's anticipation. A solitary house, too, in the distance reminded me how few are those remaining who are tabernacling nearer to the sunset than I am.

A comparatively cheap bungalow has charms that no residentially-furnished house can match. The latter makes one feel that he is more owned than owner. The very door-mat is a sort of bristly butler that denies your admittance to your own property until you have bowed and scraped yourself into prescribed society appearance. The furniture is not so much your own selection as it is a tribute to the taste of the cabinet-maker and upholsterer, and if it is less homely it is also less homelike. The

parlor pictures are a little too familiar, for—unless they are in oil with the artist's mark in the corner—you may see their duplicates and multiplies in the parlors of your neighbors who bought them in the same shops. The spirit of one's fine "residence" seems to be that of an over-tidy housewife who warns you, "Don't lie there!" "Don't smoke here!" "Be careful everywhere!"

I recall a wealthy gentleman whom I used to visit at his palatial residence on Fifth Avenue. After showing me his half-million picture gallery and enough curios to enrich a public museum, he would say,—“Now come and see where I myself live.” We would retire to a small room, the cartridge-papered walls of which made a good background for cheap engravings, photographs of scenes he had visited and faces he admired, some of them cut from the magazines, a *mélange* suitable for a college-room or a Bohemian artist's garret.

“Take a chair! Better take two!” he would say, and himself set the example,—one for his body, the other for his feet. “Now let's have a talk. A pipe? or a cigar? The women folks can have the rest of the house.”

My bungalow serves me similarly. To decorate it I ransacked the residential attic for things that were too valuable to destroy and not good enough for display, each of which had, however, a meaning for my eye and memory: scenes from travel, bits of art-study, strong faces of strong men, saints, madonnas, and opera singers I had heard, together

with family portraits of the five generations I have known, which consecutively would cover two hundred years or, say, one-twentieth of the period of known human history. Here is food for mental entertainment even should I lapse into second childhood.

For comfort there is a heavy chestnut board, resting on four unbarked legs cut from the forest just outside, which serves for an *omnium-gatherum* library table,—the gift and workmanship of a friend—a few wicker chairs with lines drawn to meet one's back in its laziest mood; a wide and smoke-blackened fireplace with crane and kettle; a pile of logs with the resin in them ready to sing songs when the blaze shall make the shadows dance among the open rafters; my old rifle that could tell yarns enough to wreck one's reputation for veracity; some old books the very backs of which are reminiscent of their twice or thrice read contents; and a few of the newest books to remind me that I am still in the world throbbing with exciting interests. Over the door hangs a bell with its curiously carved yoke that once graced the neck of a goat which bleated at me on the slopes of Etna; this will warn me if any interloper should steal in upon my midday snooze; while a seventy-five millimeter shell from the battle-field of the Marne, suspended above my table, gives adequate warning of the terrible consequences to any tramp invaders.

Safely nested in a hammock that swings from a rafter, like the nest of an oriole suspended from a

limb of a tree, I listen to the monotonous “thump, thump” of a distant mill, and my drowsy thoughts fall into a rhythmic imitation:

Each day I'll lie among my books  
That line the shelves and fill the nooks.  
Books are the souls of greater men  
Who come from everywhere and when,  
Laden with lore and happy thought  
That gold and silver never bought.  
Like old-time friends around they stand,  
And wait to speak at my command,  
And tell of everything they've seen  
In all the provinces they've been,  
Of nature, science or of art,  
In realms of fancy and of heart—  
Some trifling things, but most profound,  
Of earth and sky and underground;  
Things deep as soul and high as faith—  
Whatever man or angel saith.

And then some day I'll lie quite still,  
Obedient to my Maker's will,  
And give no sign, nor round me look  
On wall or chair or open book,  
And answer not to loved ones' call—  
Held in the Final Mystery's thrall,  
My soul will then have gone away  
Mid deeper worlds than ours to stray,  
To learn of things that ne'er were told  
By writer here, the new or old—  
Those things that pass the range of sense  
And give to thought no recompence—  
Of lands too fair for artist's skill

To paint their charm of vale and hill—  
Whose seas are sunset's blended lights;  
Whose days are bounded not by nights;  
Whose streams are Life itself, and pour  
From out God's heart forevermore.  
. . . Deep, reap, keep, weep.—  
Dear me, I must have dropped to sleep.

When I awake the pictures pinned, tacked or hung on the plain boarded walls of the bungalow start in me each its memory. That one was made by the fingers of one of America's most promising artists; fingers that one day—how terrible the shock to me!—suddenly trembled, then dropped forever moveless; but which I still feel clasping mine in our rollicking friendship of long ago.

That photograph yonder is the face of a brilliant young journalist and fellow traveller. A young lady comes in and looks at it. "Yes; that is my father. I have no remembrance of him. I was too young. Please talk to me about him."

There is a pencil sketch of a ruined doorway on the Palatine Hill in Rome. How much more I can see in it than any one else can! Amid the ruins my eye seems to catch a heroic figure. It wears neither crown nor sword; only the black robe of a modern priest—the man who made the picture and gave it to me. I must tell his story.

Padre ——— had been a somewhat noted pulpit orator in Rome, very popular in clerical circles. I felt honored, almost distinguished, by his call upon me at my hotel. I spent a delightful half hour

listening to his conversation about the arts and history of the city; he identified so many ancient things and repeopled so many forgotten places out of the full store of his information. He rose to go; but, as his card bore no address, I ventured to ask where I might return his visit. He hesitated a moment, then said:

“I have no home address; but you will find me any morning in the ——— Gallery, where I have an easel.”

My expression of surprise brought a sad story. He had refused to take the Anti-Modernist oath prescribed by the Church, which required a pledge that he would read no book or periodical not licensed by the ecclesiastical authorities. This refusal had brought him deposition from his office as preacher, excluded him from the privilege of celebrating Mass except privately for his personal edification, and led to his being ostracized by his fellow priests. I learned in our after acquaintance that he was reduced to abject poverty; for his skill as an artist was too meagre to bring him any appreciable income.

I need pass no judgment upon the wisdom or righteousness of the ecclesiastical regulation from which the Padre suffered. I speak only of the tremendous conflict into which it precipitated the good man's soul,—a conflict between his conscience and the allurements of a distinguished career in the Church which he devotedly loved and in whose doctrines he believed. He made no complaint

against his superiors, and had not a harsh word for his fellow priests who seemed to have disowned him.

Since our first acquaintance I had been absent from Rome for two years. On returning I could for a long time find no trace of Padre ———. Priests of my acquaintance gave no information beyond that indicated by a significant shrugging of the shoulders. I at length discovered him. He lived in the most squalid part of the city. His tiny room was furnished with a cot, a couple of broken chairs, an old easel, his Bible and Missal, and a few books.

Yet the Padre had found a mission. He said, "There are a score or two young human rats of the lower Tiber, boys that know nothing about ecclesiastical matters, who seem to like me. They come to me for talks, and I am trying to make of them decent men and good citizens. I wish I could lead them into the Church, but you see that I cannot. It is a great satisfaction to know that no authorities can prevent me from doing a little good."

"No! No!" he said on my rising to leave, "I can accept no personal help, unless I can render you some service in return for it. I notice that your Italian might be improved."

So Padre ——— became my teacher. A more intelligent, clean-souled and big-hearted man one seldom meets. I practiced my rheumatic Italian on him in telling about American affairs, and he gave me model lessons in the purest Italian in

telling me about his own country. If I approached the subject of his own sorrows he would reply something like this: "It's a crooked world we are all living in. If any man would go straight with his convictions he must meet obstacles, perhaps get knocked down. All he can do is to get up again and walk on more carefully. But let's talk about those Italian *idioms*, which you seem to think are *idiotisms*."

When I left Rome Padre ——— gave me that pencilled sketch of the ruin on the Palatine for a keepsake. My musings as I look at it put other lines in the picture than those which the eye discovers.

Nearly all these engravings and photographs on the wall are windows through which I see far vistas that start deep breathings. Let me indulge the prerogative of an old man to be garrulous about some of them.

Yonder is pinned up a postal card. It represents a little village on Lake Garda in Italy. On the edge of the card is written a message from a young Italian friend with whom I, only a few years ago, spent some happy days coursing over those opalescent waters and roaming over the hills that wash their feet in that golden basin of the Alps. My friend was a Roman lawyer about to enter the diplomatic service of his country, and with the ardor of his contemplated profession believed that diplomacy would solve the problems of empire. We were looking through a gap in the mountains

toward the monument on the battle-field of Solferino, where in 1859 the Italians and French won the liberation of Lombardy from the age-long tyranny of Austria, and thus secured the right of way for the new kingdom of Italy.

"That, I think, is the last monument to be erected to commemorate conquest by bloodshed," said my friend. "We are passing out of the brute stage in the development of humanity. Diplomacy has taken the place of the sword. The Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente will by their balance hold at least Europe in peace."

So he talked, and I hopefully assented.

A few months later came this postal:

*"At the Front. 122 Reg't.*

"I am on the historic battle-ground where we were together. What a change!"

Two months later:

"Field Hospital in the Trentino. Hard to write with a lot of Austrian shell-pieces in my body. I am the only officer of my company not killed outright in the charge."

One year and half later:

"Just discharged from the hospital. Going back to the Front."

I must take that postal-picture off the walls. It

absorbs too much of my heart's blood to look at it—and think.

Just beyond is a photograph of one of the grandest men I have ever known, as unselfish as he was brainy, incessantly giving of his time and money to upbuild his community. To-day he is a hopeless paralytic, his malady brought on by "excessive exposure" in the cause of others. A thousand philosophers could not disentangle my thoughts as I sit looking at the picture.

Beyond is the photograph of one whom I have known from boyhood, and who has recently served a double term in the Presidency of the country. As I watch the rugged features I recall our household predictions of how he would or wouldn't turn out, and especially remember a brief outing in the slum district when he was a lad of fourteen and accompanied me on a private raid, and how he expressed a longing for a "big stick" to break up such dens of iniquity as we there found.

There, too, is a famous opera-singer, posing in some majestic crowd-captivating rôle. But I think of her, not on the stage, but sitting by the big chimney-place under the picture, knitting like a modest frau and talking about how they crocheted in Germany.

I have placed the next two pictures side by side because they suggest a contrasting facial study. One is of an ideal saint, painted by Perugino. The other is a newspaper print of a Russian soldier conscripted from some bog or thicket on the Asiatic

border. Honestly, I would trust the latter rather than the former in any worldly business. The saint is looking complacently God-ward; the soldier is looking good-naturedly man-ward, perhaps at some other jolly fellow in the trench; or telling how he helped a comrade out of a death-vortex. If I should meet the two I should expect the one to try to convert me into a monk like himself. The other would go snacks with me in his ration.

*Self-diagnosis of Old Age.*

How does it feel to be an old man? It doesn't feel. The sensations of age are less acute than those of youth. When the blood leaps in our veins it jerks us; when it flows more placidly it soothes us. I know from reading physiology that my arteries are like an old garden hose, liable to break at any moment or with a slightly extra pressure, but the life current still runs through them smoothly. Of course, the hydraulic engine of the heart has rusted valves which will soon stop working, but they work steadily yet. Undoubtedly old legs couldn't carry so far as once they did, but then an old fellow doesn't want to go so far; so it's an even game. I can sit longer in my easy-chair without restlessness, and that is delightful. Eyelids get heavy with reading, but I can take cat-naps without incessant alarm lest something in the world wants me to be watching it. Teeth impaired? No, repaired, and the workman has put no distressing nerves in them. Eyes dim? Well, I can see more

of the world's broken things than I want to, and more of its fair things that leap and shine about me than I can appreciate.

Landor said, "Age never droops into decrepitude while Fancy stands at his side," which is another way of saying that sentiment keeps the heart young though the marrow dries in the bones. Austin Dobson comments on this: [I'll quote it as a text upon which I may comment on Dobson.]

"So Landor wrote and so I quote,  
And wonder if he knew;  
There is so much to doubt about,—  
So much but partly true.

" *Can* one make points with stiffened joints?  
Or songs that breathe and burn?  
Will not the jaded Muse refuse  
An acrobatie turn?

" No! on the whole the fittest rôle  
For Age is the spectator's,—  
Reclined in roomy stall behind  
The ' paters ' and the ' maters, '

" That fondly watch the pose of those  
Whose thought is still creative,—  
Whose point of view is fresh and new,  
Not feebly imitative.

" Time can no more past youth restore  
—Or rectify defect;  
But it can clear a failing sight  
With light of retrospect."

For all the genial poet's "stiffened joints" and make-believe pessimism, it is clear that Dobson bestrides no spavined Pegasus. "Fancy stands at his side," and proves Landor to have been correct at least in one very lovable instance, namely, that Dobson never "droops into decrepitude." If his bones refuse the Spanish dances his brain lobes are as nimble as the fingers that play the castanets.

The rattle of Dobson's rhythm makes even my pen beat the measures, although I can no more write poetry than club-footed men can "trip the light fantastic toe." Hear how my heels patter.

Yes, Landor's right. If Fancy bright  
Stand every day beside me,  
There's no decrepitude of mood  
Though seventy years betide me.

For I have found the Psalmist's bound  
Of life to be as cheery  
As boyhood's days; no field to yield  
The thorns and vistas dreary.

The flowers renew their scent and hue;  
The birds keep up their singing;  
The katydids with fiddling feet  
Set all the valleys ringing.

The squirrels trim from limb to limb  
Run o'er their airy highways;  
And all the brooks with shady nooks  
Invite me to their by-ways.

The forest trees moved by the breeze  
 Their graceful boughs are swaying  
 Like hands of priests in benison  
 Above a sinner praying.

I care the less for th' scant caress  
 Of strangers' hands and faces,—  
 But aye, the friend of years appears  
 More dear for mem'ry's traces.

The madding world with fashion twirled  
 Draws from me naught but glances;  
 'Tis but one step of th' beating feet  
 Of ages in their dances.

Does thought move slow? So rivers flow  
 When flooded from great fountains;  
 Not half so grand the dash and splash  
 Of streamlets on the mountains.

There's not a thing that does not bring  
 The thought of God's own kindness;  
 The sun and moon and stars afar  
 Drop rays upon my blindness.

My musing perhaps doesn't follow the poet's rhythm, but rather the swish and whirring of that old grist-mill down yonder, whose stones grind in a sort of cadence; or maybe I have got the beat from the leg motion of a lame tinker who is coming up the road.

*Old Age Losses and Gains.*

My effort to write rhyme suggests the question,

Do I notice any change in brain function due to advancing years?

Yes, in some respects for the worse; in some for the better. Verbal memory, for instance, is not reliable. I would not now trust myself with an exact quotation in making an extemporaneous address. Names of persons and places sometimes fail me at most unfortunate moments, as in hastily introducing acquaintances, or buying a railroad ticket in the scramble at the office. I seldom get out of the dilemma as I did once in Wales. When asked where I was going I replied, "I don't know. I can neither write nor pronounce the tongue-tangling name of the town." "Oh," said the agent, "you must be going to ——." He was right.

I am surprised to note that this mnemonic illiteracy does not apply to dates. In earlier days I was as forgetful of them as some spinsters are of their ages, but latterly I can fish them up more readily. Possibly it is because, having grown familiar with the sequence of historic happenings, I bait my hook with the event associated with the date.

I note also an increasing retentiveness in respect to modern languages. As a young man a dictionary or grammar was my *bête noire*; but they are becoming companionable. Since passing my seventieth year I have acquired a fair reading acquaintance with two Continental languages, and experience a growing pleasure in their study. But for less responsiveness in the ear-drums I might

enjoy a rat-a-tat conversation with the natives of the respective countries.

It is also easier as one grows older to retain abstract truths, principles, generalizations, systematic groupings of facts in philosophy, science or history. Possibly this is because these things are more interesting to one who has had a lifelong habit of thinking about them; and interest seems to indent anything upon the memory. That such subjects are more vague than definite facts does not lessen their importance nor their power of appeal to the mind, as the mountains lying out yonder, though wrapped in the haze of distance, are the most significant and fascinating objects in all the landscape.

I console myself with the notion that an old person thinks in straighter lines and with wider vistas and therefore with more simplicity and wisdom than a young person. If the mind does not so vividly take in the details, neither is it detained by them, and so escapes the danger of being perplexed over their multiplicity. It sees the general flow of the river better for not noting all the curvatures of its banks. Oftentimes the dimming of the faculties may be rather the shading of the mind, which gives it clearer vision, as when one puts his hand over his brow to look farther away. One may plausibly strike at least a balance between the losses and gains of advancing age. The mental costs and compensations are perhaps equal.

As the years pass we lose our interest in many

things that once attracted us. This in an unhealthy person, one who has prematurely contracted senility, may be due to failure of the faculty for appreciation. The mind is in such case like an old mirror from which the quicksilver has dropped in spots, or its once pure white sheen become milked by the damp and dust of years, so that it has ceased to reflect vividly the various objects that move before it.

But where the brain has been well preserved by temperate living, and the mind remains unabused by illogical and meretricious habits of thinking, the lack of interest in the passing show of life may come from familiarity with its characters and characteristics. For much of the fascination of things is in their appeal to our curiosity. A first visit to the Yellowstone Park is exciting. The spouting geysers, boiling springs, and calcareous coatings of rocks and vegetation are novelties. A second visit is apt to be disappointing because our wonder has ceased. So in early life almost all things are phenomenal, awakening new impressions, startling us with little or great surprises. Later they are commonplaces. So was it with the Wise Man of Scripture, who had seen so much that he saw nothing with avidity and relish, and wrote, "The thing that hath been it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." To those of us who are far less experienced than Solomon the world often seems veiled in desuetude,—not always

innocuous, since it tempts to pessimism: a disease to which old people are less immune than youth.

An old story reader as he skims book after book is apt to think,—how rarely do romances make a really new plot! Writers glean from the older pages to garner into the new. One does not find in a score of novels one really novel touch of human nature. Modern sketches of life are generally only some odd drapings of the lay figures which, like the leathern breeches of our ancestors, have served other generations. Philosophy! Read your outlines from Pythagoras to Aristotle, think a bit, and save your money on the rest of the “high-brows.” Society! The same mixture of rouge and powder, diamonds and paste, brocade and fustian, soirées and slander, élite and parvenu, lords and lackeys, the Four Hundred and the Four Hundred Million—you will find all American society, English, French, German and Finnish too, in Horace and Lucian; if not, try Thackeray or any last year’s newspaper to supply what is lacking. Social gyrations, the world over and time through, are like those of a swarm of yellow butterflies on a dusty road. How can one keep interested in these old things without brain stagnation?

But some things never cease to fascinate us. For instance, a grand scenic view. The hills over yonder seem grander and farther away than they used to. This is because, though I could measure the distance with a surveyor’s chain, it is too vast for the mind really to appreciate. As the imagina-

tion expands it takes in more, and thus the vista seems to expand.

An artist of note built near me his studio. He placed it on the slope of a little valley rather than on a knoll that commands a glorious outlook. He explains his choice thus: "Even this limited view is more than I can absorb. See the variety of trees, the ever-changing colors, the graceful folds of the hillocks, the twisting brook, the birds of many shapes and songs. Every day increases my joy in it all. My soul isn't big enough, nor ever will be, to take in any more." This growing capacity of the mind—which I believe is always growing—makes "a thing of beauty a joy forever."

For the same reason we can never exhaust our interest in anything that is sublime. Sublimity is always transcendent. The essence of it is beyond us. Nothing is sublime that our faculties can bound. Hence it excites in us a feeling of inspiration. The thirst deepens as we drink. A healthy old man is apt to be a confirmed drunkard in his appetite for the illimitable.

Friendship and love never tire us for a similar reason. A dear one's heart has depths deeper than the sea. As the years of congenial companionship go by I read more and more in the face of my friend; find new charm in his accents. His plainest letter has a hidden meaning. Others reading it over my shoulder would seem to understand every word of it; to me the phrases, though superficially intelligible, are also hieroglyphs which I interpret

with a clue that love lends me; yet every time I read them they yield a new and fuller meaning.

So I put friendship among the sublimities. It also is transcendental. This may be the reason that the Bible makes more of the love of God than of His power and wisdom. It is the greatest thing in the universe, if we may compare infinities with infinities. And the love of man for man has this quality of the infinite: it is interminable; a ray penetrating eternity. But God's love is infinitely expansive; not a ray, but the fullness of day.

## XIV

### RECREATIONS OF AGE

*Memories Revived and Revised.*

A LARGE closet adjoins my house library. I call it the Hall of the Archives; the family regard it as my Biographical Ash-bin. Into it for many years have gone scraps of paper that, though not worth littering my table with, were too valuable for the waste-basket. For several decades I had promised my children and house-servants to sift said refuse, hoping to find therein some clinkers that might be burned over again.

The contents of the old closet impressed me with the immense amount I had forgotten. There were letters from persons with whom I had corresponded, sometimes officially, sometimes even fondly, and sometimes rather hotly, but of whom I have now only the dimmest recollection, or none at all. I am reminded of a clergyman who once asked me to call upon a certain gentleman who might help in a benevolent scheme in which we were both interested. As I was about to visit the individual I received a special delivery note from the clergy-

man, saying, "Don't try to see Mr. ———. I buried him six months ago." The clergyman's lapse of memory queered me at the time, but now I can sympathize with him, since there are names among my old-time correspondents which, had I been suddenly asked upon the witness-stand, I might have declared I had never heard of. *Mem.*—Have charity for some people who are reputed to be liars.

In another respect my dust-bin has helpfully humiliated me. There are certain incidents in my memory that greatly interested me at the time of their occurrence, and have often been mused over and even related to others, but which the discovery of the original documents convinces me were a little *not so*. The Psalmist struck a weak spot in human nature when he said, "While I mused the fire burned." The flames grow bigger than the original kindling. I now know that Mr. ——— was not so wicked, Mr. ——— not so heroic, and some events neither so wonderful nor so mysterious as I have been for years imagining them to have been. I may have been prejudiced, favorably or unfavorably, by what others have repeated to me; for when we gossip we are apt to cast strong side-lights upon our topic, and thus project thick shadows that entangle themselves with the real shapes of things and somewhat distort them.

The Archives furnish an illustration in point. Here is a letter from a gentleman of highest standing. It contains a proposition that I should unite

with him in a certain scheme. A copy of my reply shows that I declined to engage in the matter. Yet a few years after our correspondence this gentleman in the presence of others, being angered at something, accused me of having once made to him this identical proposal, and told with somewhat of conscientious gusto how he had scorned to accede to my suggestion. I withdrew from the circle for a while, exhumed the correspondence, and presented it to the company. The gentleman stood for a few moments in utter bewilderment confronted with his own handwriting, then with frank apology confessed his error. I can understand the inconsistency. He had brooded so long and so unwisely over the matter that he had hatched out a creature with its head on the wrong end of its body. Or perhaps the fire of musing had been so hot that it fused together his own imagination and memory.

At the time of this outburst of misplaced righteousness I recalled the advice of an old business man which led me to found my dust-bin: "Keep a record of all matters that you are sure are not unimportant. Buy a letter file and a copying press. Recollections become hazy."

Here is another equally unfortunate brace of letters.

No. 1.

"DEAR SIR:

"You are altogether in the wrong. I agree entirely with your opponent, Mr. W——. It is only fair that I should plainly say so."

No. 2, from the same writer a year later :

“ DEAR SIR :

“ I am informed that you are under the impression that I opposed you in that matter. I did not. You were clearly right. I have always thought Mr. W—— to be an unwise man. I could not side with him. It is but just that I should write you this, that you may have no ground for thinking unfavorably of my position.”

I have not the slightest doubt of this gentleman's honesty. He had changed his mind, and forgotten that he had changed it. *Mcm.*—If this be so regarding matters once distinctly in our personal knowledge, can we give unquestioning credence to even honest witnesses of historical events, to their characterization of men and movements with whom or in which they have been closely engaged, especially when years have passed between their original observation and their narration, during which the witnesses were liable to be influenced by their own predilections or hostilities, or by much conference with others like-minded with themselves? Marginal notes have a persistent tendency to get into the text.

My meditations in the refuse-closet were productive of another impression. I had hitherto thought of my life as a short one. First and second childhood seemed to touch. Life a “span,” a “breath,” a “vapor”—how apt the similes! But as I slowly moled my way through the age-yellowed

and dusty papers I felt that I had been a long time going.

What multitudes of people I have known, companioned with or fought with! How many ventures slowly planned and wearily pursued for months and years, many of them futile! What depths of experience that exhausted patience until I cried, How long? as I climbed down into or up out of them! What protracted waitings and watchings in times of fear, sitting beside a loved sufferer, nursing returning health, or smoothing the path for those who were on the road that has no turning! Each of these experiences was like a condensed lifetime. And what a multitude of them!

These old papers remind me also that I have lived contemporaneously with a long period of the world's history. This package of letters tells me of my brother's tramp across the Rocky Mountains about the time that Daniel Webster was orating on the impossibility of the Republic passing that gigantic wall on which Heaven had written, "Thus far and no further" to our national ambition.

Another note refers to my cousin, a preacher in "Bleeding Kansas," who laid a brace of pistols across his Bible, while the deacons stacked their Sharp's rifles in the pews on either side.

Here are letters from a brother, written from many a field, as for four years he followed the bloody steps of progress in the Civil War.

Here is an old address, made the day after the assassination of President Lincoln. By request I

repeated it nearly fifty years later. Most of the time of its second delivery was spent in explaining the meaning of its original references, and in attempting to reproduce the sentiment that lay between the lines; for, with all our knowledge of Lincoln, the present generation does not know him as he was to those of us who followed or opposed him in the days of his testing.

I also have come across a reminder of a pleasant visit at Elberon during Grant's Presidency. The General very graciously received my host—one of his army staff—and myself. The happiest remembrance of the hour was, however, sadly marred by our reading in the next morning's paper,—“Grant on another drunk.” “Not seen for over a day.” A college president later informed me that Grant's next “debauch” was spent in the company of himself and his venerable wife!

This bit of paper records the birth of the still existing French Republic, and that one tells of the founding of New Germany, and another scrap indicates the making of Italy out of its heterogeneous medieval kingdoms and duchies. And I have lived through these world-shaking events and felt their tremor!

While the heap of my Archives has been growing, Science has advanced more than in any thousand years before. Forests have given place to cities containing millions of inhabitants. The common life of mankind has changed its customs and ideals. The map of the hemispheres has been torn up

and repasted. Several Armageddons have made the earth rock as with earthquakes, and several heralded Millenniums have dawned behind the thick clouds that blotted them out.

And yet I am still living! Surely Methuselah was not so old, unless the ancient records have been mutilated by the redactors. As I come out from my closet for fresh air I feel the weight of my shoulders and that I ought to be stooping. I imagine that even my trousers' knees have bends in them that the tailor can never press out because of the crooked limbs inside them. I shake off from my hands the dust of those old boxes and envelopes as a Pharaoh coming to life might have rubbed from his hands the dust that had infiltrated itself into his coffin.

Again and again I plunge into its *mélange*.

How the closet fascinates me. In it are rare comedies and tragedies too. Here is a taste of the latter.

A young girl writes me from the county jail:

“DEAR SIR:

“I have lived through another night in this horrible place, but it is killing me. I am slowly but surely going out of my mind. The people here are the very lowest of human creatures. I hold my hands over my ears to shut out the blasphemies. Another such night and I will hang myself to my cell door. Pray for me, and for—him.”

This girl was very poor, but bright, and had secured a position as secretary to a professional man of some prominence. This man's wife was a

termagant, apparently crazed by the drug habit. An affection sprang up between him and his secretary. They eloped. The girl was charged, apparently at the instigation of the wife, with having committed theft of jewelry, etc. Knowing the girl's family, I could understand how in her ignorance of society she might have been led into her escapade, but could not believe in her dishonesty. I visited her in the prison. Her whole demeanor confirmed my impression of her innocence in the matter of the theft. But that prison! It was a pandemonium of bestiality. And here was a poor soul, whatever her folly, still with a sense of honor and refinement, shut up for weeks in this almost hellish association with hardened criminals. Judge —— allowed me to take the girl to her own home and put her under her mother's care, on condition that a benevolent lady in our neighborhood and I would be responsible for her appearance in court when called.

(Several letters relating to the affair are missing from the package. I would not retain them, but had thrown them into the fire as soon as I had read them. They were from certain very righteous people who upbraided me for having interfered with the "just punishment of an abandoned woman.")

The trial of the girl came off. There was not a scintilla of evidence for the theft. The property alleged to have been stolen was not even missing.

Another letter in this packet is from the man who misled the girl. It says, "She was entirely inno-

cent. I alone am to blame for her leaving her home. I shall make any amends that can be put upon me."

The man's wife died. He at once married the girl. They moved away, and I believe have lived quiet and honorable lives in their new community.

Here are letters from an acquaintance who had spent twenty years in prison for forgery. I first knew him as a rather brilliant young lawyer. The story of the blasted life is too sad for publication.

Let me take the bad taste out of the mouth by some things better. In a letter I read, "I think Mr. —— has made a large contribution to our national life in the way of moral enthusiasm." The man who wrote that sentence was the opposing candidate to that Mr. —— in a political campaign for the Presidency,—a campaign unrivalled for abusive oratory since the days of Thersites. The courteous reference to his rival was in a letter written on a matter entirely foreign to the election. The writer went out of his way to pay the compliment to his antagonist. Contrast this with the scandals which the smaller fry of politicians indulge in.

Let me repeat in this connection a remark once made in my hearing by a Judge of the Supreme Court: "I have now been for over forty years a close observer of men in Washington. They are of all sorts. But I have never known a statesman who long retained prominence and the public confidence who was not also great-hearted, honest,

generous, and possessed of high ideals of conduct. Herein lies a secret of even political success."

I should like to print that at the top of every page in the diaries used by our rising generation of politicians.

Here is a letter which I prize for a sentence in it, which is like a little window looking in upon a generous soul.

There had been discovered in an Eastern monastery a document dating from about the second century A. D. It was difficult to translate with accuracy, being written in Byzantine Greek. My correspondent, an expert classical scholar, had published a rendition of the document into excellent English. His work was highly prized by scholars and widely praised. A little later another scholar published another translation. On seeing it the first translator recalled his own work, and pronounced the opinion that the new attempt was the better one. In a letter I expressed the view that, while his action showed magnanimity, it was hardly called for, his own work having such merit that it should be widely circulated. In his reply occurs this sentence:

"I enjoy a thing better said by another more than I do anything I can say myself."

Now scholars and literary men are human, and have a partiality for the children of their own brains. Goethe for a while carried at least a bodkin for Schiller, and the wrangle of poets reminds one of the bickerings of the gods on Olympus, which

Virgil rebukes, "*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?*" In spite of his disclaimer, I adhere to the notion that my correspondent did a very fine and a very rare thing.

Here is a bit of paper that has revived the memory of several months of delightful study. I had been asked to read a paper before a historical society. I assented to write on the career of a hero of whom I had the vaguest impression except that he was a real hero. My promise was conditioned on the Society's furnishing me with needed information. My mention of the name brought the reply from the learned secretary: "Who in thunder was Scanderbeg?" A few evenings later at a literary club I propounded the secretary's question. A professor of history in one of our big brain hatcheries replied instantly: "Why, he was a Scandinavian mythical character." A noted educator ventured to correct him: "No; he was a German theologian. I am sure that I have read one of his books." Having but just acquired the information myself, I immediately posed as a superior authority, and announced that the mysterious individual was none other than a medieval Balkan chieftain. The task of resurrecting his life and times was one of the most pleasurable episodes of my own life. It was a rare relief from the madding crowd of our own day to lose oneself now and then in the Albanian mountains, and mingle with the people who sang and fought there a half century before America was discovered.

Here is a "scrap of paper" more honored than that which passed between Germany and Belgium. A famous trial was in process. The crowd was especially interested in the anticipated appearance of two prominent citizens who were presumed to be bitter enemies, and would on the witness stand tear each other's reputations to tatters. Meeting Mr. A. casually, I asked, "Why are you so incensed at B.?" He replied, "I have nothing against him. We once quarrelled. But we shook hands over the affair. I don't know why he threatens to assail me. I must, of course, defend myself." Later I met Mr. B. "Why are you so incensed at A.?" He replied, "I have nothing against A. We once had a sort of misunderstanding. But we made it up. But why should he threaten me? I must, of course, defend myself." I said, "Will you lunch with me tomorrow, and tell me more?" He accepted the invitation. I then sought A. and invited him also, but said nothing of Mr. B.'s expected presence. When the two met it was like the meeting of two black clouds charged with lightning. Neither spoke for a moment. I then repeated to them jointly what each had told me. "Now, gentlemen, I will leave you together for ten minutes while I talk to my wife about the fried potatoes. If you don't like the lunch we will countermand it." The lunch came off. Not a word was uttered by any one about the occasion that brought the party together. Neither testified at court. But I have and will always treasure a little bit of paper signed by both.

One other bit of jetsam before I make a wreck of the old closet: At a watering-place I met a lady of remarkable beauty and brilliancy, a distinguished social leader. I have never seen a finer specimen of the charm of face and form that perfect health combined with proper art can give a woman. Every evening she was naturally the centre of a group of admirers, I, of course, being only a thread in the fringe of her receptions. One night she had been especially vivacious, with bright repartee to each one who wished her a pleasant journey to her home on the morrow. I and my wife were the last to speak to her. She surprised us by saying, "Won't you come out to the piazza where it is now quiet, and give me a little talk?" There with our backs to the hotel lights, and facing the stars, she said, "I am apparently in excellent health, am I not? But to-morrow I am to submit to a surgical operation which, as I am warned by my physician, is usually very painful and seldom successful. I have tried to show by my manner no anxiety. Why should I cast the shadow of myself upon others? Besides, none of these people could say anything to help me."

We talked very seriously until a late hour; yet we talked cheerfully of problems beyond the touch of the surgeon's knife. The next morning a servant brought me a note, and with it enclosed a pretty little scarf-pin. The note read: "Please keep this, which I have picked at random from my bureau cushion, as a reminder of our conversation last

night. I am sure that all will be well, even if not as we will it." A few weeks later I received the following from a member of the lady's family: "——— has passed the ordeal successfully; thanks, say the physicians, to her courage and cheerfulness through it all. She sends to you and Mrs. —— her greetings." This was before the day when Anæsthesia became the goddess presiding over hospitals and chambers of suffering.

So much for the old closet. I have just spent an hour by my grate fire, burning hundreds of letters and mementoes, lest, after I am gone, they should fall into the hands of those who could not interpret them. Why not? *Pulvis et umbra sumus*. Many hundreds of documents I retain just to munch on when memory calls. But as they relate to peculiarities of my own career they have no place in the reminiscences of one who poses as only a specimen of the *genus homo*.

#### *Interest in Little Things.*

In these more leisurely days I find much pleasure in making the acquaintance of little things, which in the exigencies of a crowded professional life I often overlooked. I now envy some of my friends who, though they had bigger projects on brain and hand than I had, had the disposition and took the time to interest themselves in things which to my bigger conceit seemed too trivial to divert me. How many resting spells from groove-worn thoughts, how many brief but exhilarating mental excursions,

how much knowledge acquired which would have made me wiser and more able to interest and instruct others, would have been mine if I had followed more frequently the beckonings of things which I esteemed of little account!

Now that I can pause and look around I am spell-bound by the multitudinous wonders that environ me. There are no little things, except in physical bulk or passing form. As the slender ray from the tiniest facet burns with a lustre from the diamond's heart, so there is scarcely anything that does not bring one a wealth of suggestion. A wave is not a bit of bellying water; it has more scientific significance than the richest galleon sunk in sea. A leaf is an offshoot of the mighty energy of universal vegetation, and not a mere fluttering patch of color, like a rag on a bush. A smile may signal love as deep as the soul. An unpremeditated act may reveal a whole character. A child's face prematurely old with toil or poor food may serve for the indictment of our entire civilization.

They miss much who are always straining after the seemingly great things. Their eyes are telescopic; they take in the stars, but do not note the flowers and faces that throng life's pathways. They are obsessed to know the big theories, the marvels of discovery; but they never note the arched neck and velvety step of a horse, or how a dog looks at you, and tries to say, "I love you." They are familiar with the crashing events of ancient history, the renowned names in the world's

biography, but have no interest in Jane or Jim or the policeman who watches their property, nor in the fine table-linen that mother-in-law gave to Mary, nor in their own boy's school lessons, nor why he didn't lick the other boy whose demesne is the other side of the fence. After all, the windings in the life-path may mean more for our happiness and usefulness than even its destination. Life's greatest lessons are often in its episodes.

I recall the advice given us by our old professor of rhetoric: "Avoid great themes. Take a slender topic, and try to broaden it, for every truth has limitless outreaches, as every brook finds its way to the sea."

### *Friends With Nature.*

For contented old age one should be on good terms with nature. I like Wordsworth's

" I love the brooks which down their channels fret,  
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they."

Nothing can be more depressing for a man who feels his failing strength than a notion that nature is depleting him, is inimicable, wants to afflict him and bring him low. For this torturing folly we are largely indebted to the pessimistic literature that abounds. We are scientifically and poetically bugabooed with the fantasy that the winds that sigh through the forest are the dirge of vegetation; that sea-waves are the teeth of the ocean

snapping at the enterprises of men; that earthquakes are the scowling wrinkles of sudden passion on mother nature's face, volcanoes her eyes flashing with rage, tempests the breath of her scorn and hate.

On the contrary, I am convinced that nature is our best friend. This I say notwithstanding the memory of some painful slappings she has given me, the scars of which I still retain. Let me make an extreme contrast. Man is supposed to be loving. "Humane" is derived from "Human." Yet since 1914 men have wrought more horrors on the earth, made more mutilated flesh, piled higher human bodies, made more "countless thousands mourn" than all the catastrophes of nature during the six thousand years of the earth's known history. Any one of a hundred battles has made more wreck than the earthquake of Messina or the lava-sea of Vesuvius. And this cruelty is man's deliberate treatment of his fellows, coolly calculated and remorselessly pursued.

But nature has never shown any such grudge against a human being. That she is deaf and blind, and does not know whom she is hurting, is the worst that can be said against her. She is at least no worse than the fat mother who smothered her babe by rolling on it in her sleep.

But what about natural diseases and death?

It has yet to be shown that torturing diseases can be scientifically charged to nature; that man himself is not indictable for "criminal negligence"

in allowing their spread. Unnatural living, where the hasty flush of passion or the indulgence of temporary weakness has prevented the self-discipline of common observation and common sense, is recognized to have been the occasion of the introduction among mankind of the most terrible of our physical scourges. Purely natural disease, if we may call it such, slowly lessens the physical functions, and often age furnishes its own anæsthesia. But for what man himself has done to enfeeble it bodily vitality would doubtless vanish as gently as the odor passes from the drying petals of a flower.

Medical science attests this optimistic view of disease with the theory that remedies are only expedients to assist nature in her usual processes, which all make for health. *Vis Natura* has been the choice prescription of physicians since the days of Galen. Even the ancient Decalogue declares that the Lord of nature visits "the iniquities of the fathers upon the children (only) unto the third and fourth generation," but that He shows "mercy upon thousands (of generations) of those that love Him and keep His commandments." As in the old mythology, Antæus has only to touch the earth to renew his strength.

Death, when it comes in the due process of nature, that is, when unaccompanied by the pains induced by either inherited or personal transgression of nature's laws, is not an evil. The Arabs say that "Death is the Kiss of God":—a

kiss that gently steals away our breath. There is vast benevolence in the scheme that prescribes for a man, tired with the wear of his generation, that he shall lie down and rest; that when one has become satiated with his experiences of this world, indurated in his opinions (as most old people are) he should move on, and so make room for fresh life to people the world. There is nothing sadder than to see an old man, like a shrivelled apple on a December tree, trying to cling to his withered branch on the tree of life.

So I comfort myself in my brown and crisp days with the thought that better men may be nourished on any substance I may leave behind me, especially if any tiny bit of the moral and intellectual world shall be at all fertilized and enriched by my having lived in it for a time.

This is not merely my philosophy; it is a part of my religious faith. Christ was the Lord of nature; His miracles proved it. The great value of miracles was not in the amount of happiness they gave to their immediate beneficiaries, like the blind and sick whom He healed, but rather in that they demonstrated that the universal system of nature was dominated by Himself, the most loving being that ever trod the earth.

With such a faith I find a constant exhilaration in trying to exercise it. In love of nature I endeavor to "hold communion with her visible forms" that disport themselves at my bungalow doorway. What multitudinous insects buzz their

paradisiacal psalms as they flit through their brief generations! The birds and beasts, in that blessed unintelligence that shuts out anticipation of evil—in which lies the bulk of human suffering—all take their part, singing, croaking, roaring, according to their various laryngeal instruments, in the grand diapason of their Creator's praise. The crash of a falling pine tree, making room in the soil for its successor, punctuates the music like the ringing strokes in the Anvil Chorus. And I sit in my doorway, and purr my part in the general worship.

### *Owling Hours.*

"Do you sleep well o' nights?" inquired a venerable friend.

"No, thank God! I don't," I replied.

"What!" exclaimed my friend. "Do you thank God for insomnia? To me sleeplessness is like being swallowed by a boa-constrictor that keeps me stuck in his throat for hours. In the darkness one can only think, think. I hate it. So I sometimes get up and read, or watch the stars until my eyes blink back at them."

"To me," I replied, "the best part of the day or night is when I can lie awake in the small hours, before the roosters and the milkman make me doze off again with their monotonous noises. There is so much to think about; and one can't think satisfactorily in the daytime, when family and neighbors and newspapers are apt to break up the pleasant web one is spinning. But it is a bit of

Paradise to lie flat on your back, on a bed soft enough to make you forget that you have any projecting angles on your body, when darkness and silence are so thick about you that they muffle the senses and keep them from obtruding their trivial suggestions,—then to live over the past and prospect the future, to spin romances, and enact tragedies with yourself safely out of all danger. How I have at such times rollicked with my own remembered boyhood, made love again to my wife, played with my babies now possessed of babies of their own, refought my battles, rewon my successes, took again my worstings when they no longer hurt, wept over the recollection of sorrowful hours, but thanked God for the “loved and lost a while”! What crowds of familiar faces look in upon me—faces that have withdrawn from sense-sight into the Great Haze!

Then, too, as I lie awake I think of what the great world is doing, what it did yesterday, what it did a thousand years ago, and what it is going to do long after I have dropped out of its *mêlée*. What a tremendous play to watch! And one can't watch the stage well unless the lights are turned down in the rest of the house.

The best things I have ever thought of, at least that I have thought out, had their hatching-hour between midnight and dawn. Then I have arranged economically and wisely the program for the following day, developed topics upon which I must write or speak, and, above all, settled ques-

tions that have disturbed relations between "Me and Myself."

"You must have a good conscience, or a bribed conscience, to talk in that way," says my friend. "You evidently haven't had the temptations and tumbles that I have had, or you wouldn't run so light-footed over the past."

"No," I reply, "I haven't a good conscience. If I should criticize myself I would be stuck as full of devils' arrows as Saint Sebastian was. But I don't criticize myself. I am not worth criticizing. It's too small business to be finding fault with oneself. But give me a saint, and I will point out his very freckles with jealous delight. Job said that the Lord imputes folly to His angels, but the good Book also says that, as for the sins of common folks, such as you and I, the Lord forgets them,—that is, of course, if we ourselves don't like them, which is the real meaning of repentance. I once quarrelled with a man who said with sanctimoniousness, 'I forgive you, my dear friend, but I can't forget it.' That is worse than 'Injun giving.' God doesn't forgive with a string attached to His grace. He says, 'I will remember them no more forever. I will blot them out as a thick cloud,' and spread over you only the clear azure of my smile. Now I am not greater than the Almighty. If He doesn't shadow me, I'm not going to shadow myself. Besides, if a man should forgive another seventy-times seven times, shouldn't he be a little merciful to himself when the Lord tells him that He has no

longer anything against him? So I don't let my wretched past disturb me o' nights any more than I would let the mice nest in my pillow."

"But," pursues my friend, "aren't you sometimes anxious about the future? The night blackens with its darkness all my bugbears. I need the full sunshine to cheer me before I tackle the problems that lie ahead of me."

"What," I reply, "do you want of the sunshine? Look at the stars in the night sky. I think of them as the myriad eyes of God. And don't you remember that the good Book says, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of all those whose hearts are toward Him'? With the sky full of watchers I lie awake until I purr myself to sleep again with as little anxiety as a kitten has in the lap of her mistress."

### *The Great Gloaming.*

My old friend frequently visits me. He is not far from the exit of life. He is like some awkward people who have the habit of standing in the doorway, saying that it is time to be going, but delaying their departure, and perhaps letting in a cold draught upon those who remain. My friend's questions are as chronic as are the twinges of his rheumatism.

"Where do you think we are going when the mortgage on the body is up and we have to move out?" "What do you imagine we will do out

yonder, when we have no limbs to do anything?" "Are there any Gates Ajar in the Beyond, or is there only infinite vacuity?" "How are we going to *be* at all without bodies, and with less matter than a wind has?"

I used to debate with my friend. We have had some intellectual wrestling matches, out here on the crumbling edge of Land's End. Plato's arguments for immortality, Cicero's hopes, medievalists' dreams of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, all the ghostly shapes recently discovered flitting through the brains of the Society for Psychical Research—we have thrown these at each other's heads until the violent exercise has threatened to hasten the fatal stroke that impends over both of us.

Finding debate about the unknowable utterly unsatisfactory I adopt a new method. I assume a manner of utter nonchalance.

"I don't know, and I don't care who, what, where, how, or for how long I shall exist after the frost of life has split off the last bit of the rock of my present being."

Of course, this startles my friend. He thinks I am worse than an agnostic because I want to be one. Then I appease his fear for my sanity by something like this:

"Your son James is going away, out into the uncertainties of life. But one thing is certain: wherever he goes you are going to follow him with your solicitude. You are going to set him up in business, put your name on his paper if necessary,

and so forth. I haven't heard the details of your scheme, but that I understand is your general purpose. Is it not so?"

"Of course it's so," he replies. "But how did you or anybody else know that? I have told nobody, not even the boy's mother, what is in my mind."

"Nobody told me," I reply. "It wasn't necessary that they should. But everybody knows just what you will do for James. He is bone of your bone, and as far as you have been able to give yourself to him, soul of your soul. You have always done everything that is paternal. You have educated him, given him a good time during his youth, disciplined him at times when it hurt you more than it did him. Now that James is about to begin another sort of career you are not going to drop him. I would insult you to think such a thing. I am sure that the boy is going to do well if his father lives and doesn't go into bankruptcy, or James himself doesn't go astray. I know that as I know that the river which has flowed so far will flow on in the same direction, only getting deeper and broader. Now see here, old chum, hasn't the good Lord—'He after Whom all the fatherhoods in heaven and on earth are named,'—hasn't He been good and thoughtful toward you and me for over three-quarters of a century? Do you think He will go back on us now that we are at one of the crises of our existence? Why then go back on Him? It shows a lack of faith, a lack of common decent con-

fidence to be incessantly asking Him how He is going to do things. That is the reason that I say I don't care for the future. I mean, of course, that I don't carry care for it. I like Whittier's

“ ‘ God forgive the child of dust

Who fain would see where faith should trust.’

You and I are neither of us made of the stuff that martyrs are made of—not having been made to be martyrs—but we ought to be ashamed to let old Polycarp beat us in his magnanimity. You remember that he said to his executioners who wanted him to deny God, ‘Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no harm. Why should I deny Him?’ When I was a young fellow, as foolish as I was ignorant, I used to play Atlas, and try to carry the world on my shoulders. But now I am going to let the world roll as God wants it to, and to roll me along with it. I can trust the gravitation of the Eternal Love to keep me safe somewhere on the surface. We don't need to overcome our fear of death by any forced belief in crowns and glories that are preached at us. As Shelley would put it, we are not human moths fascinated by the stars. We ought to be contented with what God-directed Evolution has in store for us at the next cataclysm. The worst that can happen to us is the bump at the landing on the eternal shore.”

In this way we two old pals chat at the great

doorway, as we metaphorically pull up our coat collars and prepare to go out.

Now comes the news that my friend has really made his exit. He passed quietly. Why not? I think some new hand must have touched his, very softly, very lovingly, and have drawn him through the doorway. I am sure that he left a smile for me as he went.

I was one day sitting in a tent in an Eastern land, talking with a companion. A sudden wind lifted the canvas door-flap, fluttered it a moment, then let it fall back again over the opening. It fell between us two. I was on the inside of the tent, with the narrow vision of cooking utensils and Arab pistols. He was outside, and had the vision of the hills and sky. So the death-wind has separated my old friend and me. I remain in the little world. He is in God's great Out-of-Doors.



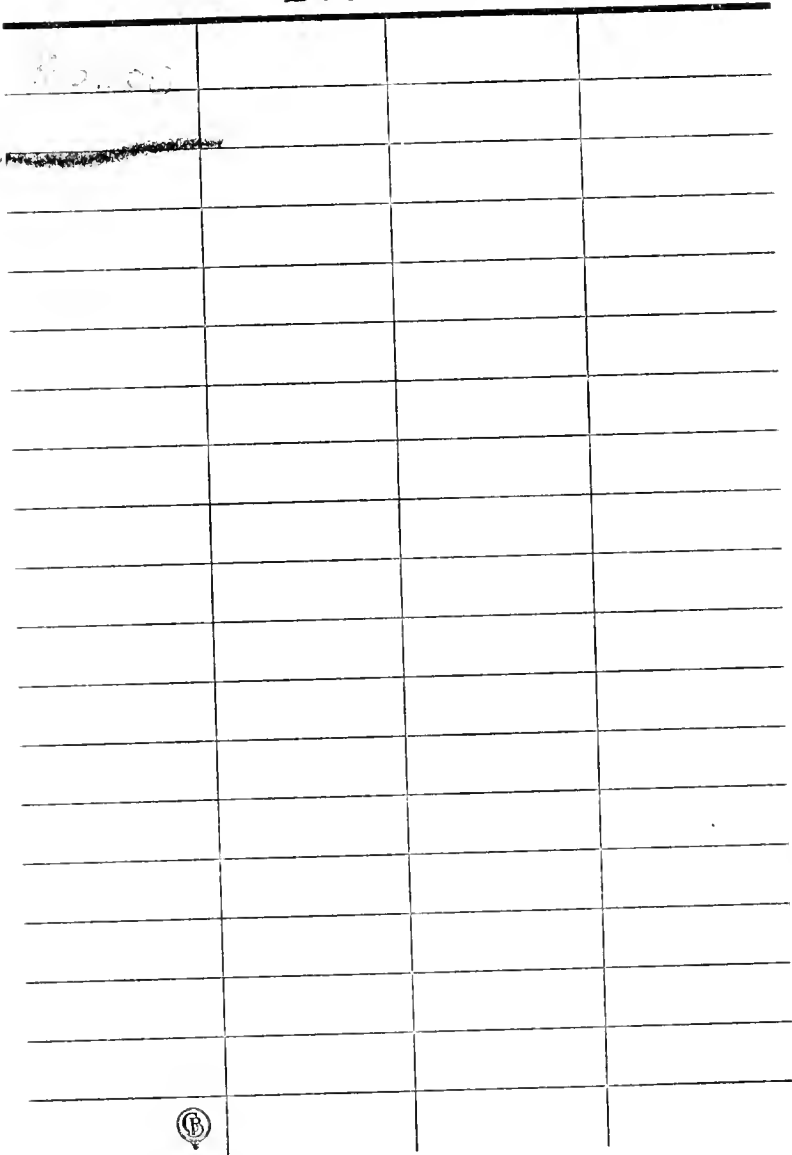










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